Encounters

WITH ALL SORTS OF PEOPLE INCLUDING MYSELF

with

the Travelling Psycho-Analyst—a Florentine Cabman—Saad Zaghlul Pasha—the Woman I Did not Meet—the Man in Search of a Faith—Gandhi—Two Chinese Students—Rodin in Shanghai—Love at First Sight—Chicago—a Film Star—Vaudeville in New York—and many more are included in this brilliant survey of the most interesting corners and characters of the present-day world

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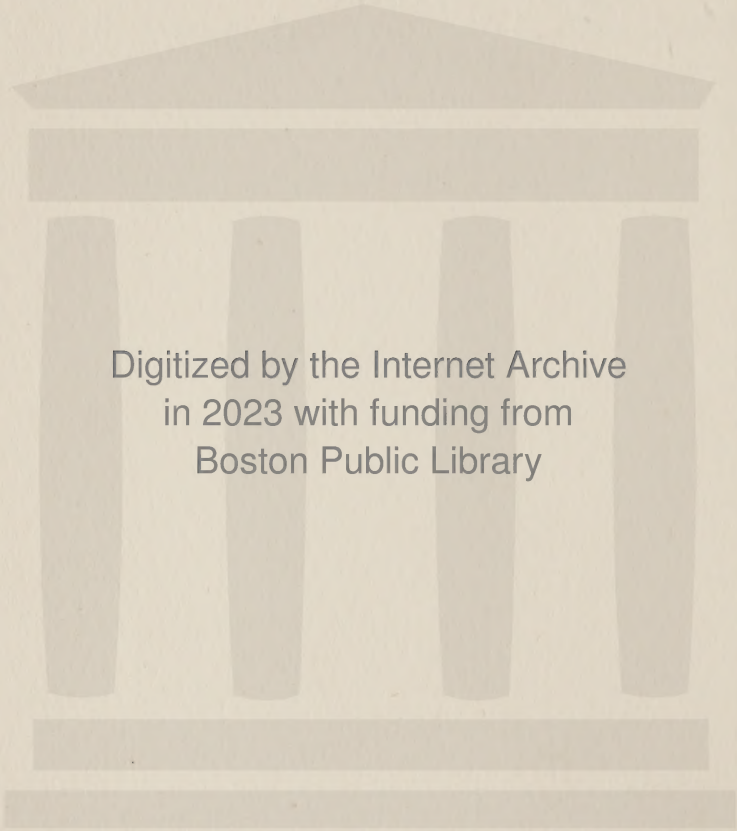

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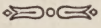

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TO

MY WIFE

MY PERPETUAL ENCOUNTER

PREFACE

IN the autumn of 1924, at the indiscreet age of twenty-five, I set out for a year of travel. These *Encounters* are a result of that journey. If it be advanced that I have said nothing new, I can only reply, "Toutes choses sont dites déjà 'mais comme personne n'écoute, il faut toujours recommencer."

These studies are impressions thrown, for the most part, into a fictional form. I have added a few encounters with celebrities, although I learnt early on my journey that the men with big names have a set speech which they deliver to stray visitors; and then they are dumb. I do not blame them, but it makes their conversation less interesting.

In the other encounters I have not made use of actual people: that would be an abuse of the hospitality and the courtesies I received. Every one of the characters in this volume is an imagined type around whom impressions have been gathered. The mood has on the whole been more satiric and less kindly than I had intended. I explain how that happened in my last Encounter.

I have two acknowledgments to make. First, to M. Albert Kahn, whose generous and imaginative Fellowship gave me the opportunity of travelling. My gratitude to him I have expressed elsewhere.

Secondly, I have used in this volume portions of articles which have appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor* (Boston), *The Manchester Guardian*, *The Saturday Review* (London), *The Western Mail* (Cardiff). To the editors of these papers for the courtesy of their columns and for permission to quote from articles I give my thanks.

B. I. E.

SOUTHAMPTON,
ENGLAND.
June, 1926.

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ENCOUNTER I

WITH THE TRAVELLING PSYCHO-ANALYST

I MET him first in a little café off the Boulevard Michel-Ange. It was late enough for every one to have left, and we sat at tables next to one another with empty glasses before us.

"Will you have a bock with me?" he said. In the Café Michel-Ange one drinks with strangers as a matter of course. I joined him, and fresh glasses were put before us. He spoke French like an Englishman, but his English had vague suggestions of some indefinable foreign influence. He wore a defiant sombrero which suggested artistic pretensions, and I do not know to-day to what race he belonged, though I suspect English ancestry on one side, and an exotic Jewish influence on the other.

"Did you know pre-war Paris?" he asked in the course of rather casual conversation. No, I was afraid I did not. It was then he began to talk and I to listen. Indeed, it would have been difficult to break in, for the words came out like water from a burst pipe. He was alone in Paris, had been alone for months, and he felt he must talk. I had the impression that he was working off on me the streams of thought suppressed for innumerable months.

"You didn't know that other Paris?" he said. "Ah! Then you have seen the ghost, but never the flesh. Europe is just a ghost to-day. I have been all over Europe trying to find what is left, what we still think and believe. But Paul Valery is right, 'l'Hamlet européen regarde des millions de spectres.' These French are for ever talking of the *regions devastées*: the real *regions devastées* of Europe are the mind and the spirit. Europe to-day is the neurotic hospital of the world, and it would require some flaming spirit, some Christ or Mahomet, to regenerate it."

"But do you want pre-war Europe to return?" I asked.

"No! We were wrong then, but we had vitality; we are wrong to-day without vitality. I have been spending these last months in Germany and Central Europe and Italy, and hence this depression. There are only two moods in Europe to-day: one is the mood of the defeated, of the materially ruined; the other is the mood of militaristic nationalism: both moods arise out of the fear of destruction. The mood of the defeated I found in Germany and in Austria; men sought freedom from their material despair in the belief that they would create a new spiritual order. In the youth movements, the simplicity movements, the conception fermented that somehow one was finding a new synthesis of life, a new god. The defeated youth of Europe, which has lost all its usual joys except sensuality, seems to think that a new deity is hiding round the corner of each new road, or in every dark spot in a café. When you touch the Slavonic fringe it is worse still, for then they are not

looking for the new god ; they think that they themselves are the new deity. How many Slavs have I met prepared to undergo a mild mental crucifixion to prove their divinity.

" And then there is that other mood. You can see it everywhere, in Germany, Russia even, and Czecho-Slovakia ; Italy is the supreme example. You give up all your ideal aims in order to salvage your home. The essence of Fascism is that the right to glorify your own country transcends every other value in the world. Morality and justice are sops for fools ; the strong man takes the road, reaches the goal, and no one asks how he got there. There may be blood on your shirt when you arrive, but no one will dare to ask you to explain it. Mussolini is the embodiment of that, with the addition of all the usual gay colours which give a movement romance and insincerity. It is the legacy of Napoleon : the right to ' get away with it,' as the Americans say. We are all playing the same game in Europe, more or less ; we cling desperately, vilely, to our lesser loyalties, like men on a raft, and let the general European good take care of itself. The nationalists have overcome the internationalists in the race to capture the conscience of Europe. Their game is an easier one : their field is more compact."

There was a momentary pause while I ordered further bocks, and then for the first time I had the chance to slip in a word.

" But in all this talk of the mystics and the nationalists, don't you forget the majority ? Most people all over Europe seem to me to be just trying to exist. Look at the French peasant. He will tell you that

he hasn't the least interest in government policies. All he wants is peace, to till his land, harvest it, eat, drink wine, beget his kind, and so on from generation to generation. In Italy it is still more true. If Fascism is tolerated it is only in the hope that it will lead to a quiet life."

"You indulge in the perpetual fallacy of the sentimentalist," he replied. "Ninety per cent. of the world is always occupying itself like that; a little work, a little emotional release, and a little morality so as to keep somewhere on the middle of the track. All that doesn't count for me. I am interested in the few who are always present in life at that point where new ideas are breaking into consciousness; the creative aristocracy of the world. The majority is cow-like, as it always has been. Of course there are the cynics and pessimists. Like the poor, they are always with us, and a number of the acutest minds have joined them to-day. Look at the tragic mood of weariness in these post-war students of the Sorbonne. Can you condemn it when you know that it is largely induced by sheer poverty? Can you condemn anyone who lived on this continent through the war years for a *carpe diem* philosophy? Post-war cynicism is not the undergraduate's sneering at a life which he has never experienced. This post-war cynicism is the cynicism of experience, and comes from those who have tested life for ten years now and really found that there is nothing worth while in it. That is why we have had recently all this concentration of thought on sex. You can still occupy your mind with that when you have ceased to think about anything else. Sex and

fear are the two things which a primitive savage shares with our latest product of over-education."

He paused for a moment, but only a moment, and then looking up from his thick black eyebrows he raced on, now with a personal assertiveness which emphasized the Semitic in him.

" I'm an interesting fellow. I was a school-teacher once in the '05's and '06's, and so I found early in life what a terrible pathological development popular education really was. Teaching was so ineffably immoral a profession that I took to journalism. I had taught the masses the three r's, and now I helped to produce the sedative literature which should prevent them from thinking. Journalism I found to be quite as immoral as teaching, except that you were in less direct contact with the object you vitiated. At the outbreak of the war I became a war correspondent of sorts, and for two years I saw more of the war than most people : that's why I never talk about it. After that an inconsiderate piece of shell put me out of action, despite the fact that I was only a spectator in the game.

" In England I was at a loose end, and in the muddle of the mid-war period I tried to find some study that would distract me completely. Psycho-analysis was the thing I found.

" I came to believe violently in Freud, not so much in his actual theories as in the fact that sex was the one dominating motive in life. It was the war that led me to that, for every modern war seemed finally a question of economics arising out of population, and population means propagation, and propagation means

sex. With religion I seemed to find the same thing. All religions seem to be a compound of some story about death and the dead, and some sexual theory of life.

" I took to practising psycho-analysis ; that was the fatal step. I knew precious little about the subject, nothing about normal physiology, and I was without any clinical knowledge whatsoever. Still, I took a map of England and a medical directory, and I found that while there were many practising psycho-analysts in London, there were none in the provinces. I tried Manchester, and for weeks sat in a dingy little office, hoping that some abnormality would find me out; but those meat-tea Northerners seemed depressingly normal. At last Maude Lynnette came, a spinster, and forty. I started to examine her, and if Freud's interpretations are really right, the emotional sanitation of Maude Lynnette was rank. It was after the fortieth sitting that the full realization of the terrible fact came to me : Maude Lynnette was falling in love with me. I found that instead of seeing the good things of life, birds, air and sea, I could only see the murky illimitableness of Maude Lynnette's soul. I revolted. I fled. I am here.

" Lord ! " he said, " how sick I am of it all. Yet it did something for me. I am muddled for the moment as to what I do think. It seems to me that there is a central driving force in all of us, call it passion, emotion, life, God—what you will. We can use that force in all sorts of ways, to create music, or poetry, or sky-scrapers ; we can turn it to cruelty or suppression. The sickening thing in modern life is that we are

turning nearly all that energy into sex. I have spent the afternoon at the Hôtel Luxembourg in the Musée Rodin. Cool marble writhing in sex: it is symbolic of what we are to-day. Europe has sickened me. To see all that might have been and what is! To think of all the power that there is in the world, and of how it is wasted. Isn't there somewhere an element in life essentially good? Couldn't human power work somewhere towards that? There's a lot of truth in the old fables. Do you remember the two stories? One is the story of the ugly woman who turned into a princess: the story of love making lust divine. The other is the story of the lady in gorgeous trappings who, stripped, is a thing of hideous sores and scars: the story of lust gilding itself for its play. Those two ideas are for ever in life: the perpetual effort to idealize and the continual process of disfiguring. Look at what machinery could have done to Europe, and misdiverted power makes industrialism out of machinery. Industrialism has disfigured us like a virulent disease: we might have been a continent of loveliness by now.

"I believe that Europe's big day, materially, is over; but with those German mystical fools I think that in our material poverty we are going to find a new life of the spirit. I am going round the world seeking something like that, which I never, in my more sober moments, really expect to find."

At this announcement I felt that I must break in. "I'm going round the world, too." He was but indifferently interested.

"Why are you doing it? Tourist?"

"Indeed not," I replied, "I'm an Albert Kahn Fellow."

"And what may that be?" he said.

I disliked this scant respect, and from my pocket I drew a copy of the Fellowship Regulations and from them I read:

"An Albert Kahn Fellow is one who undertakes to travel round the world for one year to study the countries of Europe, the East, and America. He is to observe the social habits of the people in each country through which he passes. He is to study their philosophy, their religion, their art and their politics. Above all, he is to study their national ambitions and to relate them to international aspirations. Not only present times, but past times are his province. He has regard for the past traditions and history of all these people whom he visits."

"That sounds the sort of programme John Mill might have given John Stuart at the age of ten. You'll have a busy time."

We sat in silence for a few minutes.

"I'd suggest accompanying you," he said, "but I am not a fit companion for anyone. We may meet again, though, who knows. Where do you go first?"

"I'm going to the League of Nations Assembly at Geneva."

"The gas-bag of Europe," he replied. "Precious lot of good that will do to you. Well, so long." And he disappeared.

ENCOUNTER II

WITH A FLORENTINE CABMAN

FIRENZE is celebrating its share of the Victory in the Great War. Every one has stopped work: the cafés are full of men drinking coffee or *chianti*: all who have uniforms wear them, and every one, of course, has medals. Groups of women talk in the narrow streets and discuss deaths of sons and husbands and such appropriate themes. Those who have mourning clothes wear them, and black is the garment of honour for the day. In the afternoon there is to be a procession, with a band, and soldiers in blue-grey and gold. Already hundreds of *carabinieri*, in gaudy blue and red uniforms and very smart in white gloves, are coming in ready to control the afternoon's crowd.

No public programme has been arranged for the morning; one can sit or drink, or walk; or, if one is devout, turn into one of the innumerable churches and ask Our Lady's blessing for the dead. All these things one may do, but one thing above all is to be done by the best people. They hire a one-horse carriage for the morning, along with the lean horse and a cabman in shiny top-hat. First they drive to a florist, who is well prepared for such visits, and buy

enough flowers to bank with them the entire car, until the old Florentine carriage with its dirty cloth coverings is transformed into a bower of flowers, yellow and gold and white. In the midst of this the family will sit, and drive slowly through the town. It is a picturesque tribute to one of their number who was killed in the war.

Angelo was one of the oldest of Florentine cabmen. How old no one knew, nor seemed to care. Indeed no one knew anything about Angelo, not even where he lived or drank or dined. Up to two years ago he had been living with his wife in the attic of a house behind the *Santa Croce*. When she died he had disappeared, but no one knew where. Even his brother-cabmen had forgotten that old Angelo's son, Guido, had been killed at Caporetto. Angelo had not forgotten. . . .

Early on this day of celebration, just with the dawn, Angelo had gone to the church *Santus Spiritus* and said six long prayers to the Virgin.

"You remember Guido," he mumbled. "I will remember him too." He looked up at the figure over the altar, the Virgin with the Babe in her arms. "She is very thoughtful to-day," Angelo said. Perhaps the Holy Lady was thinking of just how many complexities had been necessary to bring about Guido's death: street-fighting in Moscow; Teutonic ambitions; secret Anglo-French alliances; murders at Sarajevo; Austrian aggression; the pride of a thousand counsellors—all to put a bullet through the stomach of a Florentine cabman's son.

Angelo went to the stable where his carriage and

horse were kept. He cleaned the dirt of last night's rain from the wheels, and with the same oily rag dusted the seat.

"We will make it all look good to-day," he said.

With the same care he cleansed the harness, which he had seldom touched before. He had to steal the cleaning outfit from fat Michele's cab; but that was safe enough, for fat Michele was making love to a flower girl down near the *Via Tornabuoni* and was always late in the mornings now.

Angelo's horse was a joke in Firenze among the cabmen and a theme for pathos among the English spinsters. Angelo groomed her down to-day and cleaned even her tail, matted with accumulated dirt.

"We are ready now," said Angelo. He drove slowly, without ever looking for a fare, to the florist's where the "flowers of commemoration" were sold. The florist was not yet open, so Angelo drew his horse up outside.

"We can wait," he said.

He was still there when an English-speaking lady with two bags and a brown-paper parcel rushed up and seated herself in the cab.

"Station! Station!" she said.

Angelo came to life; he sprang from his seat and addressed the English-speaking lady with a torrent of oaths such as only an Italian can use. One hopes the Divine Virgin did not hear his blasphemies, and as for the English-speaking virgin, she had been wise enough not to waste any of her ten-years' Italian residence in learning the language. She

understood enough to think that she was dealing with a madman, and gathering up in one armful her two bags and the brown-paper parcel, she fled. Angelo mounted his seat again and waited.

He only moved once before the shop opened, and that was to take a bundle of small paper notes from his tunic. He counted them over as one who has done it many times before and knows the very dirt and creases of each note he handles.

"Fifty lira," he mumbled. "It is enough."

"You have an early customer," said Pedro, the florist, when at last he opened his shop. "These celebration-days were made by the god of cabmen for you rascals."

"Yes," Angelo replied, "I have an early customer."

Together Angelo and Pedro heaped the carriage with chrysanthemums, orange and white and red, and over all the banked flowers they put an enormous floral wreath.

"Your customer is doing it thoroughly," said Pedro, as he accepted the mass of small dirty notes.

"Yes," said Angelo; "he wanted it done as well as it could be done."

"It will be a busy day for me," said Pedro; "*'rivederla.* I must get in to breakfast."

Angelo looked up and down the narrow street: it was quite empty. He mounted his seat. Once he looked at the banked flowers behind him..

"Sit there, Guido," he said, "you shall have your day."

ENCOUNTER III

WITH THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS ASSEMBLY: GENEVA

DESPITE the abuse of the travelling psychoanalyst, I went to Geneva. I still remember the adolescent optimism with which I left the Hôtel Richemond that first morning for *La Salle de la Réformation.* Never have I met such unimpressive externals as in this building where all nations were to meet: an unadorned structure of light-grey stone, rather like a nonconformist chapel, and guarded by quite ineffectual Swiss guards dressed in all the gaudy trappings of an effete militarism. Poor men in blue and white and gold, quite unable to protect themselves against ticketless American women who meant to effect an entry.

The interior did not help to raise confidence: an immense ground floor with innumerable desks and two high galleries for the Press and public. Its effect was to make men just puppets, while the red acoustic cones in the ceiling gave the whole a wicked suggestion of vaudeville. The public gallery was so high that we must have seen that assembly nearly as God saw it.

If one could only possess a mind camera, how

interesting, but how terrible, that scene might be! Even with human sight watching was good enough a game. Nansen, the explorer, tanned and massive, is covering his ear with his hand in a vain attempt to hear the local grievance of one of the smaller nationals who is muttering to himself from the rostrum in execrable French. An elder British statesman has lost his notes for a discussion scheduled for noon; a noisy flutter of papers arises from the British benches. The French, thinking that their honour has been attacked in the third sub-committee of Committee C on the previous evening, are holding a full-dress committee meeting in their corner of the floor. The "smaller national" is still speaking, though the interpreter is his only audience. The Japanese are all writing notes on a case which they will put before Committee F on Emigration at 3 p.m., and which must be telegraphed to the Tokyo papers before they present it. The Chinese are staring at the speaker with rapt attention, though they do not hear a word that he is saying. Forests of South-Americans glare at one another in frank boredom; some of them read the *Journal de Genêve* more or less furtively. The President has the immobility of a statue; he would seem to have reached the Nirvana. The member of one of the smaller nationalities is still talking. . . .

It was then that the American who sat by my side put down his twelve-days old copy of the *New York Times* and said to me:

"I'm through for the morning."

"I think I am too," I said. "A coffee in one of those cafés overlooking the Lake might be an idea."

"Say, boy," said the American to his son, a young Harvard graduate, sitting by his side, "are you staying on?" The son decided that he would also leave.

We went together to the Café Victoria and there met Ingham, the journalist, and Miss Helen Blayne, a publicist of feminine matters who yet retained elements of feminine charm.

It was the American who spoke first.

"Thank God for America," he said piously. "We have got a new country and can do more or less what we will with it. We can make it one and mix the different nationals who come amongst us. The French on arriving in America lose all this talk of honour and begin to love America; the Italian likewise decides that good living and good drains are better than dreams about reviving Roman glories. Somehow we manage to make even Bulgarians and Serbians, when we get them, forget that they are anything more than men. Something in our land does that, and unless you do it in Europe, too, you will go under."

"What have we got, Dad, after it all," said the Harvard graduate son. "In Europe they live; in America we just stagnate. I remember one day, in a corn-town in the Middle West, I saw a family airing itself during the week-end; father and mother, an aunt and a son and two daughters sat on the porch. For hours they sat and stared. Just bovine! Not even a thought of sin to keep their minds active. I should have liked to have given them war."

"I suppose," said Ingham, "you think that the rattle of swords in Europe is more amusing than that.

I agree with your father—and so would you if you had lived here instead of just coming over to watch it. Let me tell you an incident which happened in Florence just a month ago. Some anti-Fascists took a photograph of Matteoti, the murdered Socialist, and put it under the shrine of Our Lady in one of the chapels of the beautiful little church of *San Salvatore al Monte*. You know the one which overlooks Florence from the Arno. Michelangelo used to call it *la mia bella villanella*. As soon as the news got round, processions of anti-Fascists were formed to visit the shrine and do prayers before the photograph. Soon the Fascists heard of it, and they formed a procession to take away the picture. A still larger anti-Fascist procession formed to put in a new and larger photograph and to say still longer prayers. This led all the Fascist forces in the district to gather and raid the church. Before the day was over there was a serious fight between the two groups. Now in America all those people would be engaged on more useful employment, essentially unromantic. They would be getting rid of the dirt and the squalor in which the Italians seem content to live. There is much to be said for salvation by works, even if the work be plumbing."

"But," said the young Harvard man, "look at what Italy has produced: Giotto, Botticelli, Michelangelo, Raphael."

"Yes!" said Ingham, "and the sooner Italy becomes poor enough to have to sell them all to America the better for her. We live in Europe battening on our dead. We believe that we are great, just because

our dead were great. Every Frenchman lives in the belief that the France of Napoleon is still in existence. Englishmen seem to think that we are still in the balmy prosperity of mid-Victorian days. That was the real reason for Mussolini's success. He came upon a poverty-stricken, blood-ridden Italy, with a dream. Uniforms, black shirts, signs, cries, and the whole based on old Roman orders with the suggestive appeal to the classical imperialism. Italy is still living in the ruins, on that dream. If Europe is to do anything we must destroy our dead. Get rid of the illusions of our great past and face our rather sordid present. Ibsen saw that, long years before the war; he found that if you wrote plays about heroes the audience thought that they were heroes too. Show an audience a play about gods and they will soon think themselves divine."

"I still think," said the young Harvard man, "that you are getting somewhere over here. After the war I find a ferment in Europe, as if you were coming to some new conception of life. You mentioned Ibsen just now. Do you remember in his *Emperor and Galilean* he talks of coming to a new synthesis of life? Christianity is all for the spirit with a chastising of the body, and paganism is all flesh without any spirit. He speaks about the new life, the third kingdom, where both conceptions would meet. In wandering about Europe and Central Europe, on relief committees, I thought I found something like that. An effort to throw on one side all the old conventional values and find something better."

"We used to cling to that hope of finding something

and have found nothing at all except cynicism and sensuality," said Ingham. "Don't be deceived, all this talk is not the outcome of a faith but of a neurosis; the escape by a spiritual conceit from unpleasant realities."

"Yes!" said the American, "you have a long way to go. Look at this League, which the cynics describe as France's instrument of protection against the rest of the world. What can you do at Geneva without Germany or Russia, and without sanctions to enforce what you do decree?"

Helen Blayne spoke for the first time, a smile on that face of hers which was preserving its forty years in a most creditable way. "I suppose when we mention the League, America is out of the discussion," she said.

Every one looked uncomfortable for a moment, and then the American replied:

"I will tell you, Miss Blayne, exactly what we Americans feel. When we are in Europe we feel that we want to help you, that we are part of it all. When I go through a Balkan State and see most of the able-bodied men flourishing swords and doing very little else, I feel rather sick; but still, whenever I am in Europe I feel one with you and sometimes rather ashamed of my country. But when we are in America, it is difficult to think of Europe consistently for any length of time. We lose interest in you altogether. We feel that we are isolated from your quarrels, and we are glad to be isolated. Try and imagine our Middle-West farmers of the great corn belt who have never been as far from home as New York. What

conception of Europe can they have. They know of England only as a naughty little country which did some wicked things in George III's time. Why, I know of people in the Middle-West who, when they speak of 'the war,' mean not the late European War but the War of Independence."

"Don't be too hard on the old League," said Ingham. "She teaches us lessons. I have been here for all the six sessions and I have seen wonderful improvements. The strange thing is that in Geneva itself we have the right atmosphere for a United States of Europe. Delegations come here full of national jealousies and small local prides. Something in the atmosphere of this place makes them lose all that. The tragedy is that they have to leave Geneva and return to their own countries. Once the old grey light of their own capitals dawns upon them they forget what they learnt here, and they are back in their jealousies again."

"I want to give the League a chance right enough," said the American, "but it seems to me that your great danger in Europe is a matter which the League cannot touch. I mean Bolshevism."

"Your fear of Bolshevism, sir," said Ingham, "is a tribute to the efficiency of the popular Press. If only my profession had ideals as adequate as its standards of efficiency, what might it not do. Since the war we have been afraid of every movement which was in the least bit progressive or Liberal, and so we have dubbed them all Bolshevik and wrapped them in a red flag before throwing them on to the furnace. In America you called La Follete, Bolshevik; probably Fosdyke will get the label too. In England the Labour

movement, even the most constitutional elements, were dubbed in the same way. In the Orient we use the bogey of Bolshevik propaganda to destroy any aspiration which people out there may have."

Ingham was warming to his theme.

"At any rate," he said, "I should rather see the next war fought over Bolshevism than anything else. Bolshevism is an idea, and it would be better to fight for an idea than to struggle merely for national interests, as we did in the last war. Thank the Lord, a struggle over Bolshevism could never be a struggle on national lines. Sooner or later we shall have to settle this problem of property: we will have to decide what we have a right to own and how we are to own it. Capitalism was once an ideal; it was creative. More and more it is becoming not creative but merely possessive. What do you think about it all, Miss Blayne?"

"Ever since the age of four I have thought men fools," said Miss Blayne, "and really I see no reason for changing that opinion now. You talk glibly about the past war and the next war. You don't feel. Men have a wonderful capacity for getting away from reality. That is why quite nice men are capable of being so cruel. Women can't get away from realities; their bodies see to that. If each man in this League could remember the pain of just one child-birth he would talk more cautiously, and if people who declare wars knew less about mistresses and more about mothers there would be a better chance for peace."

Miss Blayne's face at ordinary times had a pallor not without beauty, but when she spoke it flushed

with a shy red which fascinated even those who were hostile to her. She continued:

"Men are prepared to talk, especially in war time, in a vague way about men and man power, while a woman will talk just about the one man, or the few men that she loves. That is why women take life so much more seriously than men do. When a man declares a war he says: 'Possibly we shall lose one hundred thousand men,' and it doesn't mean anything to anybody. A woman in the same position would say: 'I shall lose Michael, or William,' or whoever it may be, and she would think thunderously before she would do anything to endanger that life.

"I know Nature has made it difficult for us to take a big part in public work, but yet we must, if things are to be healthy. I don't know what part women play in America. I remember one instance in Texas where the Governor was removed from his post for misappropriating public funds, and they made his wife Governor in his place. I thought that splendidly impartial, especially as they allowed the husband to become her campaign manager and deliver most of her speeches.

"Europe is a man-made country. We derive our social and moral institutions from Christianity, which considered women just creations of the devil to tempt men. From his frequent visits to Martha and Mary, Christ, like most modern business men, seems to have enjoyed the company of women only when a little tired. He never allowed them any serious place in His work. The aim of Christian institutions has been to give woman just about as much education as a

Sudanese savage. Yes, I know you will want to tell me all about the improvements of the last fifty years, but what are fifty years ? Your laws are man-made, and man-administered ; your prisons man-made, without any care for feminine hygiene ; your houses are made by men-architects who have never tried to run a house in their lives. Even now, after you have made a pretty mess of it all, I doubt whether you will let women help you to put things right."

Arguments were surging up in four male breasts, but by now the delegates were pouring out from *La Salle de la Réformation* : the atmosphere of lunch, which is the end of discussion, was in the air.

Ingham looked out on to the Lake. " I wonder how many solutions of world troubles that water has heard," he said.

ENCOUNTER IV

WITH A PRIEST ON THE MEDITERRANEAN

THE Mediterranean had been misbehaving herself and all my illusions of a pleasant trip to Alexandria had been destroyed. On the first night it was perfect, and after watching the crystal lines of light from Catania I had gone below to find that the cuisine of the old, dirty Italian packet boat was unexpectedly good. We dined too well that night, but most of us were not to dine or breakfast or lunch again for two days. We were a strange assortment: a Polish lady whose sole knowledge of English was contained in "Yes! we have no bananas," which she had learnt from a dance record; an Italian who had business of an unspecified kind in Alexandria and who warned us that the weather would be rough, "Myself a very bad sailor," he added. There was one of those cosmopolitan gentlemen of business who seem to travel the world seeking fresh amours and whose attention was already drawn to two English girls who were going out to join a travelling company at Port Said. Besides these, there was an old, over-substantial German couple who ate more articulately and more heartily than anyone else, and opposite

them a thin, intellectual-looking man dressed in black, and myself.

For the next two days I was in my cabin, under the tender but ineffectual administrations of an old Italian *femme de chambre.* She looked as if she had been a rascal in her day, but now she was more than middle-aged and nearly toothless. She insisted upon calling me "Americano," believed that I was rich, and hoped that for all the care she was giving me I would help to keep at school her two daughters, probably created temporarily for this very reason. On the third day I was still wretchedly ill, but I dressed with difficulty and crept outside just to escape from this terror who, for forty-eight hours, had possessed me so completely.

There was no one on deck except the thin intellectual-looking gentleman in black. He was seated in a deck-chair and looked very pale indeed, though he assured me, as he invited me to sit by him, that he had not been ill.

"Raw onion," he said, "that is the only remedy. Whenever I go on a journey I carry raw onions, one for each day of the voyage. I eat one every morning before breakfast, and for that day I know that I shall be free from sea-sickness."

He bore traces of having used his remedy. Once in the deck-chair by his side, I felt too weak to move. All desire for motion left me. We began a desultory conversation, during which he gleaned my purpose in travelling. Once he had discovered that I was not in business nor in the civil service, he became communicative. He had once been a priest and a mis-

sionary of the Roman Catholic Church in Kalgan, North China. His work had apparently been successful, until some higher member of his Church had insisted that he should teach the Chinese that Kwanon, the Goddess of Mercy, was, in reality, the Virgin Mary. This had seemed to him a dishonest procedure, and after a great mental upheaval he had left the Church and started a mission of his own. For ten years he had carried on this lonely work, sometimes finding success, sometimes distrusting himself utterly.

"After the war," he said, "I felt so utterly out of touch with everything that I decided to come back to Europe for a time; above all, I wanted to see the Mother Church again. I have been six months in Europe and America, trying to estimate what is their faith to-day and the measure of their disbelief."

I record what I remember of his conversation. At the time it seemed interesting, but interesting as a dream may be interesting, for while the cultured voice recorded its impressions I was struggling with my *mal de mer* in a faint, nauseous atmosphere of garlic.

"I got to Rome," he said, "just in time for the Lateran Procession. Once every hundred years they celebrate the so-called foundation by Constantine of the first Christian Church under the Empire. Nothing that I saw in Europe impressed me as much as that scene. From the Basilica of the Lateran, in the late afternoon, came a long procession of friars and priests and pontiffs in a double file, and each figure carried a candle. There were Franciscans in their brown cloaks and sandals, and grave, bearded Capuchins, who looked neither to right nor left but murmured

prayers as they walked. Pomp was there, too, in the jewelled garments of the cardinals. They returned in early evening, when in the sudden Italian twilight the blue sky shows dim. A thousand candles shone in the night air and as many voices sang. . . . It was a Catholic procession; indeed, the whole history of the Catholic Church could be read into the orders represented there. Yet it seemed to me that day something more than a Catholic procession. It was a Christian procession in the very widest sense of the term. I had spent the morning in the Catacombs, where the early Christians hid and prayed and buried their dead in secrecy and fear. But you know the Catacombs, perhaps?"

"I was only in Rome a few days," I replied, "and the Catacombs were one of the many things I missed."

"They are worth seeing if you can avoid the parties of chattering tourists which haunt them. A brown-cowled Trappist monk will lead you down by the glimmering light of a taper to long passages cut out forty feet beneath the surface of Rome. Here, before there was Catholic or Protestant, Christians gathered far down in the black earth and worshipped. Above, and not so very far away, stood the Colosseum, where other Christians, in those stern first centuries of the faith, were driven by the Romans to fight wild beasts for the amusement of the Roman crowd. Down in the bowels of the earth one could remember how stern those days were for the faithful. Yet there must have been a bloom of youth upon Christianity, the memory yet distinct of the Figure who a

century before had preached His revolutionary faith through the plains of Judea. This procession seemed the triumph of the Catacombs over the Empire, the martyrs overcoming the Cæsars.

"I went back to my hotel that night very dejected indeed. I felt that I had broken myself away from the noblest tradition in the world. What right had I to stand up against this wealth of learning and expression with the centuries behind it?

"The next morning I went to St. Peter's, and the illusion snapped. St. Peter's was like the ostentatious drawing-room of some exceptionally vulgar *nouveau riche*. I saw then that, instead of the Catacombs conquering the Empire, the Empire had absorbed the Catacombs. The Babylons of the world have a wonderful way of adopting into their Upper Ten the Christs who become too troublesome.

"One incident at St. Peter's completely ended all my delusions. I had finished looking at the pomp of the Papal Tombs, and Michelangelo's *Pietas*, and I was pushing my way through one of the padded leather exits, when I found that some one was pushing from the other side. First came an Italian, small, bent, with a face like a withered crab-apple. He was supporting on his arm a woman, whose white, drawn features seemed nearer death than life. A young Italian girl followed them. They seemed destitute, as only Italians, among Europeans, can seem destitute. Their very rags seemed ashamed to be attached to such bodies. The woman's hair was loose and fell in black streaks down her neck and shoulders. They saw the holy water, and the man dragged the woman towards

it. She crossed herself. Then down the aisle they moved towards the statue of St. Peter. The woman was far too ill to show any expression except one of pain, but a look of terror came from the eyes of that small man with the notched black face. With the help of the girl, they bent the woman down until she could kiss the bronze toe of the Apostle, which the lips of the pilgrims of fifteen centuries have worn thin. As her lips touched it she collapsed. Two *carabinieri* closed in around the group to help to remove her. I left; I had had enough. That was the first of a long series of incidents which led me to distrust the Catholic Church as I found it in Europe."

I felt that, ill though I was, I must say something.

"But," I murmured, "is it fair to generalize from the Italians? There is some truth in the remark of the cynic that the Italians should build the churches for the English to worship in; and that the French should spend their time telling the English why they should not worship. Can you tell from the outward observations what the spirit is seeing and feeling? I like to watch people taking the holy water in churches in different countries. I spent a whole afternoon that way once at the Church of St. Germain in Paris. First a *poilu* came: he crossed himself quickly as if he were on drill parade; then an old woman who seemed full of reverence; then a woman with a big basket full of food, and five little children with her: she stood them in a row to cross themselves. She herself was in a great hurry. Splash, went her hand into the water, and when she found she had gathered up

too much she gave her hand a good shake before she let the holy water touch her forehead. Another day I watched Italians take holy water in the Church of *Santo Spirito* in Florence. I remember a little Italian girl climbing up the font to get holy water for her even smaller brother. They laughed and joked about it, but I couldn't say that they were not reverent. I came to the conclusion that I knew nothing at all about the effects of ritual on people in different parts of the world."

"The observance may be little and the spirit much," the priest said, "but I went everywhere trying to trace some fineness of spirit, and I failed to find it. I went from Rome realizing all the depths of superstition and deceit which surround the Papacy. I have been in England and America since, and of course I could not help seeing how much the strength of the Catholic Church has increased since the war. Catholicism is the great religious sedative. Once you adopt that faith you can cease troubling about belief. All that is left to the priest; you just believe and you are secure.

"I often wonder whether we Anglo-Saxons, we English-speaking people generally, ever had a sense of worship. I love still to worship, to lose myself in the spirit of things; but I have spent so long in the Orient that to some small extent I think I am an Oriental. If only we could transfer that spirit of worship to the West and still retain our practical ability, we should then be a great people. All religion meant to us was a group of stories which we believed to be history, and from them an emotionalized

morality and a belief in a future existence. In all this the emotionalized morality was the only element which really counted. What conception of the future life does the Christian Bible give us? All I know is this passage in *Revelations* where John describes the New Jerusalem: 'And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it was transparent glass.'

"All that sounds very much like the best parlour of some American super-millionaire. We of the West can only describe the spiritual in the terms of the materially opulent. Of course you may say that it was intended as allegory, but we Western people have interpreted it as fact."

I still felt ill and inadequate to make any real contribution to the discussion, yet something, I felt, must be said.

"I suppose we seek the means of life rather than the ends of life, just as in America the plumber, rather than the priest, has the important part in the scheme of things. But was it not always more or less like that? Did we ever treat Christianity seriously, except

as a system on which we could hang a code of ethics, with a convenient scheme of rewards and punishments ? "

The priest turned his pale face towards me. " I think perhaps that is true, but I find that Europe and America have come to an end of all that. They have ceased to find any religious obligation for ethic, and since they have been unable to substitute any other sort of obligation, they have ceased to believe in an ethic at all. Our free-thinkers used to tell us that people would lead just as good a life once they condemned all religion as superstition. It has yet to be proved, for the free-thinkers, we know, come from homes and from cultural backgrounds which were definitely religious. Just look for a moment at that period in our literature when there was a definite cult of sin and diabolism : I mean the 'nineties. The men of that period are haunted by a sense of the hideousness of sin. Do you know the drawings of Beardsley, that perverted genius ? They explain the point which I am trying to make. Do you remember Beardsley's *The Climax*, that moment of sadistic love when Salome kissed the dead, bleeding head of John the Baptist ? Did you ever watch the eyes and lips of Salome in that picture, the terrible consciousness of sin which lies in them ? It is the same with Ernest Dowson, the great poet of that period. Do you remember that shortest and most poignant of all his poems :

> They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
> Love and desire and hate :
> I think they have no portion in us after
> We pass the gate.

> They are not long, the days of wine and roses;
> Out of a misty dream
> Our past emerges for a while, then closes
> Within a dream.

Dowson can talk as much as he likes of having chosen 'the world's sad roses,' but his feet are torn and his eyes blind with sweat; whatever his dissipation and diabolism he cannot forget the religious life behind him; and he ends as a Catholic. The young barbarians of our own day have got beyond all that. They have got beyond all ethical and religious scruples and their dissipations no longer make them sad."

"Does that trouble you?" I asked.

"I think I am sufficiently in the old world to feel some qualms," he said. "I remember particularly the younger generation as I found it in America. They seemed to have experienced all the destruction of standards which the war introduced, without any of the sobering influences which the tragedy of the war brought in to the youth of Europe. America, I found, was just beginning to discover the 'nineties and their naughtiness; they were publishing Oscar Wilde in éditions de luxe just as if he were a classical author. In Europe, thank God, we have outgrown all that. Of course Europe has had a post-war cult of sensuality, but it has arisen out of despair, not, as in America, out of an excess of animal spirits.

"That younger generation seems to be passing through its biological period, morally. They know all about their minds and their bodies, and they discuss them with a frankness which in my day would have been impossible. They have no standard except

that of their own desire. They insist that all that we call morality is just a tissue of conventions. I remember one young graduate in a Middle-Western university who said to me : ' The Professor of Psychology tells us that chastity is only a secondary notion from the idea of property. So it doesn't seem worth worrying about very much, does it ? ' "

" And it worries you ? " I asked. " To what standard among the older generations would you ask them to revert ? "

He turned his pale face once more towards me.

" That is true," he said. " We had sham respectability, with the mistress and the prostitute as necessary adjuncts. Still, I should like to have a look at this present generation at thirty and see what they are like then."

We were silent. The sea was calmer, and I felt less numb and useless than I had been when the conversation began. Perhaps the Mediterranean would behave herself from now until the end. He spoke again :

" Isn't it strange," he said, " that I began talking about religion and worship and that I ended, as if inevitably, talking about ethics and morality. I suppose that despite the years in China I am a thorough Westerner after all."

At that moment two young figures came up from below, he in flannels and she in a graceful slip of a costume. Arm-in-arm they walked down the deck, laughing and talking to each other. The solemn-eyed priest rose.

" Youth, I suppose, is a justification of all things ; but then, it can never be an eternal justification."

ENCOUNTER V

WITH THAT TRICKSY LADY, DAME EGYPT

THIS is a story of Egypt as she is, and it is written in humble respect for all who have to bargain or trade with those strange and fascinating people who live by the banks of the Nile. It is a very simple story: the properties are donkey-boys, donkeys and ourselves—poor, green, touristy travellers; and its setting is that beaten tourist path from Bedrashein to Sakkara and back across the desert to Gizeh. Yet it brought me for a moment into contact with that tricksy lady, Dame Egypt, as she really is.

We had planned to see the Necropolis at Sakkara and, like all good tourists, to eat a luncheon of cold ham and eggs in the house which Auguste Mariette has left in the midst of the ruins for the comfort of travellers.

We were up before light and out to the station at Cairo, where we arrived just two minutes before our train was due to depart. An unofficial "tout" porter rushed us into the booking-office, and then on to the train for Bedrashein, where our dragoman was due to meet us. Hardly have we left Cairo when the sun

takes the shadows of night off the flat, dust-coloured fields, and soon donkeys and camels, with their male riders and women walking behind, are preparing themselves lazily for the work of the day. We arrive at Bedrashein, all tidy and in order, and look around. No dragoman! When I say no dragoman, I really mean a score of gesticulating dragomen, but not Ibrahim, whom but the day before we had ordered to ride over from Gizeh to meet us.

The sheik of the donkey-boys of Bedrashein approaches, old and reverend, and asks us our trouble. No dragoman and no donkey-boys? How foolish of them and how sad for us! May he advise us? The sun is getting hotter; it would be well for us to rest in the buffet, and have something to drink perhaps, and then when our dragoman arrives he will send one of his men to warn us.

Would you suspect a plot in that? Perhaps you would; but we, in our innocence, did not.

Now the buffet was on the other side of the station from the donkey-boys, and the sheik wanted us out of sight and out of mind while he staged his little plot. Was he not the sheik of the donkey-boys of Bedrashein, and should any arrangement we might have formed with a dragoman of Gizeh interfere with his vested interests?

We retired to the buffet, where a willing attendant brought us a mixed array of Persian coffees and Schweppe's soda-water; and it was not till much later that we learnt what happened (or was said to have happened) during the next half-hour on the other side of the station at Bedrashein.

Once the sheik had boxed us up efficiently, he hurried into his own village, bribed a Sudanese policeman "to obey all instructions," and returned with him just in time for the arrival of Ibrahim, our dragoman, along with two donkeys and two donkey-boys. Proceeded an argument enforced by blows, though exactly on what lines or principles we never knew. The sheik seems to have claimed a monopoly of all donkey transactions at the station; such a complete monopoly, in fact, that it was to exclude any private arrangements which "greenhorn" tourists might make. The Sudanese policeman had been bribed enough to support this, and he fell at once to beating our dragoman, while the sheik and his following applied similar arguments to the two donkey-boys. Finally they walked off all those culprits and shut them up in the sheik's house, and left the Sudanese policeman at the door to keep watch over them.

All this must have been done very rapidly, for it was only some twenty minutes later that we saw the old sheik's face looking in at the window of the buffet on our side of the station. He was all smiles and all politeness. Did our worthinesses think that our dragoman would arrive? What was the name of our dragoman? Ibrahim? He was sorry for us: that dragoman Ibrahim from Gizeh was often known not to put in an appearance at all! Perhaps later we would consider the possibility of using two of his unworthy donkeys? No, there was no hurry. By all means let us wait to see if the dragoman of Gizeh should arrive. He bowed again, smiled again, and departed. We waited an hour, and then cursed the dragoman as

an " unreliable gyppy," and set out across to the other side of the station to find the sheik once again.

And so the sheik provided us with a guide and two donkeys and boys. He demanded payment in advance. As he expressed it, " All payments to me, and not to my boys." So we paid, and away we trotted out into the desert to Sakkara.

* * * * *

Quite suddenly one forgets this modern Egypt, oppressive with its problems and its incapacity, and one is standing within the ruins of an empire of might and achievement. We forgot even the rascal Ibrahim, who had played us false, as we stood amid the living memories of dead grandeur. One of the things we saw that day was a gang of boys working on the new excavations at Sakkara. In a perpetual circle they moved, carrying little baskets of sand out of the excavation and returning once again into the pit for more. A turbaned task-master stood over them with a long whip in his hand, which he used playfully rather than seriously, though he would crack it ominously at times when he thought that the gang were becoming a little slack. I thought, in watching those gang-boys singing their ancient chanties as they worked, that here was used in the excavation the very method which so many years ago had been employed to build these pyramids.

Of all the things I saw that day one remains in the mind with a more lasting significance. A curator showed us the new excavations, and there, on a stone panel of a temple, was an inscription written by a party of Egyptian tourists of one of the later dynasties

—a prayer to the god of the temple. Here the ink had lasted for three thousand years. Luckily the words were reverent, the expression of devout minds : they seemed worthy to have endured, and now at last to be unveiled. But how terrible to think that one's most casual scrawl may by some whim of circumstance be caught into the repository of time, and become part of the museum of the world three thousand years hence.

* * * * *

But this is a story, not of Pharaohs, but of donkey-boys. Everything went smoothly until after lunch. Our boys had led us to Mariette's house, and there we had spread out our cold ham and eggs on one of the wooden benches, and set to with a certain primitive gusto while the keeper of the house brought us a little impossible black coffee as cover for his "baksheesh." As we were resting after lunch we heard a terrible noise of voices outside the window, and a moment later realized that our donkey-boys were involved. Some scrap, we thought, which might be interesting to watch as an after-luncheon amusement ; and so we went to the door to see. Who was there but Ibrahim and his two donkey-boys, arguing and gesticulating and just on the point of blows with our guide and his followers ! Ibrahim ! What could he be doing in Sakkara after failing us in the morning ? At any rate, why should he quarrel with the sheik's men, who had served us quite cheerily ? We decided to go up to them and find out.

Unluckily they saw us coming, and the sheik's boys took to their donkeys, and behind them sprinted the

sheik's guide. Back towards Bedrashein they went as fast as their legs, or donkeys' legs, could carry them. Remember—for we remembered then—that we had already paid the sheik for the ride right to Gizeh. Oh, what a new significance that villain's smiling request of "Pay me now" took upon itself at that moment! The figures sprinting across the sand was the last we saw of the donkeys or donkey-boys of the sheik at Bedrashein.

It was then that Ibrahim told us his story: how he had arrived—a little late, it is true; how the Sudanese policeman had beaten him and kept him in the dark for hours; and how as soon as he was released he had dashed across into the desert with his boys to catch us up.

Ibrahim was very gracious about it all; nearly as gracious as the sheik had been in the morning. What would our worthinesses do? We could not walk back to Gizeh—the way was too long and one might easily become lost. Perhaps our worthinesses would use two of his unworthy donkeys? Payment? Let us not talk of payment! His only desire was to serve. There was no alternative, so we mounted Ibrahim's donkeys and trotted into the sand.

At first all that Ibrahim could do was to abuse the sheik. He would wait until that wicked man had to come into the village at Gizeh. He would treat him kindly within the village, but once that sheik had stepped over the village precincts and the calls of hospitality were at an end, he and all his family would pommel and beat that sheik until he was sorry he had ever been born. Very gradually Ibrahim slid from

the discussion of the sheik to a comment on our obligation to him. Of course we knew that he, Ibrahim, the dragoman of Gizeh, would not beg. But we were worthy people, and we did not need reminding that those were his donkeys we were riding. And as we approached Gizeh, and the Great Pyramid grew larger and larger, Ibrahim talked of many things, but that was the perpetual refrain : some little baksheesh was surely due to a man whose donkeys we were riding, who had risen before sunlight to serve us, and who had been beaten for our sakes by a Sudanese policeman. Some little " baksheesh," he was sure, we would give.

And of course we did.

That night in Cairo we thought over again the adventures of the day, but no conclusion did we reach. Were Ibrahim and the sheik of Bedrashein in league from the very beginning in an attempt to extort a double payment ? Or did Ibrahim strike an *ad hoc* bargain with the sheik's boys outside Mariette's house at Sakkara ? Or was Ibrahim a genuine sufferer whose every word was to be believed ? I do not know. I only know that the tricksy lady, Dame Egypt, had outwitted us ; and this confession I write in humble respect to all who have to bargain or trade with those strange and fascinating people who live by the banks of the Nile.

ENCOUNTER VI

WITH THE OFFICIAL: CAIRO

WE sat one evening in the garden of his house overlooking the Nile: it was the hour when the sun has left its red glow over the sky, to be caught by the slim, brown sails of the Nile boats.

A week before Sir Lee Stack had been murdered in Cairo, just outside the Education Offices; Alazhar had that morning held an anti-European demonstration; British troops still paraded the streets with machine guns, and in the Turf Club the iniquitous policy of the Home Government was nightly condemned. I knew nothing of the man I was sitting with, except that for fifteen years he had been in some sort or other of important service in Egypt. That his life was still considered to be valuable was testified by the plain-clothes detective who kept watch over him always.

"And what have you been doing with yourself?" he said.

"I have wandered over Europe and talked to pleasant people as to what is happening to things."

"And the pleasant people have talked generalities. They always do. As if anything in the world could be explained by generalities! Wasn't it Blake who

said that the general good must be worked out in minute particulars? Blake was right just one time in a hundred, but when he was right, he was very right.

"You are getting East now and you will have plenty of generalities; generalities about the English temperament and the Egyptian. There's nothing in it all except deception. Keep all the time to the facts, and find some one who can tell you them. History is just a mixture of economics, along with conflicting personalities and jealousies among the elect; and conflicting passions and prejudices among the mass. Do you know the facts here, in Egypt?"

"Vaguely," I replied.

"No one," he said, "seems very interested in the present history of this country; they all concentrate on the past. We have thousands of American tourists annually who wish to see the Sphinx smile and shake Mr. Howard Carter by the hand, but they never seem interested in what is happening in Egypt to-day. And yet, although I am sick enough of it all, I can see that it is one of the most fascinating of stories in modern history.

"What does the English electorate know about Egyptian history or conditions? Of course they all have solutions; but do they know any of the facts? I would have a testing-room in the House of Commons into which every member who wanted to speak on foreign politics would have to go before he made a speech. In the testing-room he would be given ten questions about the country on which he wished to talk. If he did not get six out of the ten right—

you see I am lenient—he would not be allowed to speak.

"Have you ever been to the New Egyptian Parliament House, the pathetic home of a still-born democracy? You will see there two busts, one on each side of the red plush throne—Mohammed Ali and Ismail; in a way the Maker and Un-maker of Modern Egypt. Mohammed Ali, like most other people who have affected Egyptian destiny, was an alien, an Albanian. He battened upon Napoleon's Egyptian successes by killing such remnants of the Mamelukes as the Master of Slaughter had been neglectful enough to leave alive. He then made himself sufficiently indispensable to the Sultan, who was of course the nominal ruler of Egypt, to become a local potentate with absolute authority. Once he had put Egypt in order he snubbed the Sultan, and even attacked him successfully with an army under his son Ibrahim. This was more than Palmerston could stand, and, with the help of the Austrians, we persuaded Mohammed that perhaps a quiet Egypt was better than a big insecure Empire.

"In Egypt he lived a busy life. He reorganized the land system; made Alexandria a modern port; he saw the possibilities of irrigation and began the Nile barrage just below Cairo here, which later we were to finish for him; any industry which there is in this country of peasants and officials owes its origin to him. Mohammed is a standing example of how unrelated education is to practical ability: until he was middle-aged the fellow could not read or write. He had a modicum, but only a small one, of the vices of the

Oriental, and, like most people of versatile activity, he found the Egyptians very trying. He refused to learn their language and snubbed them intolerably.

"Great men ought to be careful about their successors. Usually they seem to leave the matter to Providence, and Providence behaves abominably. Mohammed's grandson first 'reigned in his stead,' and seems to have been mainly remarkable for combining Mohammedism and Sadism in a rather revolting mixture. He was followed by Saïd, a younger son of Mohammed Ali, a nice enough boy. He had been educated at Paris, and had a quick intelligence but rather a weak will. He saw, while we in England were still sceptical, that the Suez Canal scheme was a possible one, and he gave Lessepps his chance. Generosity and extravagance were his two amiable vices; these he exercised in the belief that Egypt was rich enough to support them.

"Ismail, his nephew, the gentleman whose bust is, along with Mohammed Ali's, in the Parliament House, followed him. On his succession, Ismail seized Saïd's two main vices and concentrated upon them. He got atrociously into debt; some of it was his own fault, though a good deal of it was engineered for his benefit by international financiers. The 'Three Balls' of International Finance is a perpetual sign over the world; kingdoms go into pawn under them and politicians and nations are forced to collect the dues.

"So it was in Egypt. We and France had to step in to save the international financiers."

"Was it that and nothing more?" I asked.

"No; of course, it was a lot more than that.

Napoleon once said, 'pour détruire véritablement L'Angleterre, il faut nous emparer l'Egypte," and even Mohammed Ali had seen the same thing—that the Canal is the jugular vein of the Empire. Disraeli saw it when he bought poor Ismail's foundation shares in the Suez Canal for four million pounds.

" The French were interested in Egypt as creditors; we had to look to Egypt to protect our safety. We had to crush Arabi when he led the peasants in revolt against the decadent ruling classes, and take the real, though not the nominal, rule upon ourselves. Remember how recent this all is. Just forty years ago. Why, old Saad Zaghlul Pasha can remember it all, for he was with Arabi in that revolt."

" And did we do right?"

" My dear man, what do you mean by 'right'? Do you mean that Ismail had a right to crush those Egyptian people and ruin them? Or had he and his decadent followers a right to make dangerous one of the vital spots of the world? Have we done good or bad in Egypt? If you stay in Cairo you will hear just the voice of a fraction of the population; the real Egypt is the Egypt of the *fellahin*, who are nine-tenths of the population. Let me draw you two contrasting pictures. Forty years ago the peasant, half-starved, lashed by the *Kurbash* and made to work on the forced labour of the *Corvée* on the royal estates; to-day the descendants of those peasants, fat and prosperous, often the owners of Ford cars. The price of cotton has had something to do with the difference, but this so-called unrighteous British Occupation did the rest. We can still ask the people of

the most democratic and sententiously moral nation in the world to take off their hats to Cromer's work."

"But don't you think that the Egyptians have a right to self-determination? If they want Egypt for the Egyptians, have we a right to stop them, although our work is humanitarian?"

"Ah! there you are enumerating the religion of Wilsonism, which is now the fourth or fifth religion of the world. Wilson, like many other prophets, had the capacity of dying at the dramatic moment, just before his doctrines became uncomfortable. But after his death they have spread to the farthest corners of the East. Yet remember that Washington did not believe in Wilsonism, nor did Columbus.

"The settlement of Anglo-Saxon people and Europeans generally took place before this doctrine of self-determination? We won our Empire, just as the Americans won America, by the right of conquest. The history of the development of the Empire is a history of amazing victories. The strange thing is that, once we have won our Empire by the sword, we develop a moral conscience. To-day the popular cry is that we should govern by the dictates of the Sermon on the Mount an Empire won by the methods of Trajan. You cannot get an Empire by force and then sway it by moral right. At the moment, I think we are really aiming at bringing a moral idea within the Empire. We are prepared to give up our right to rule wherever we see any people in a condition adequate for self-government. We have experience in government, though, and we know how difficult it all is.

"Egypt of all countries is the most difficult to make completely independent. All European and American nationals, and many others, enjoy in Egypt the rights of the Capitulations. They are exempt from Egyptian law and from Egyptian taxation. Egypt is the blissful land where no foreigner pays any income-tax. You would imagine that the Egyptians would make the Capitulations their main grievance, for it is a very real one. Imagine the position. If you were an Egyptian and your daughter were molested by some foreigner in the streets of Cairo, you could only obtain redress from the consul of the nation to whom he belonged. Yet the Egyptians do not complain about the Capitulations because the Capitulations are privileges shared by all foreigners alike. They concentrate all the time on this anti-British hatred."

"Egypt," I said, "bewilders me. If we have helped the Egyptians, as you say, for a generation, and brought them from bankruptcy to wealth and taken hardships from their peasantry, surely they ought rather to love us?"

"The war made a lot of difference. Undoubtedly the war was a job too big for any nation to handle properly. One could not help making mistakes, and certainly we made mistakes in this part of the world. You know that at the beginning of the war we made Egypt into a Protectorate, and we had promised them that the Egyptians would not be called upon to help us in our war against Turkey. But in 1917 and onwards our labour needs, particularly for our Palestine campaign, were so emphatic that we had to get labour at any cost. The Egyptians would not volun-

teer, so we had to force them to serve. To put it bluntly, necessity forced us to re-introduce a new form of *Corvée*. Worse still, we were without men to carry out this recruitment ourselves, so we had to leave it to the native chiefs—the Mudirs. Much corruption and many a bitter quarrel was the result, and the blame for it all was referred to His Majesty's Government.

"Once we had made the country thoroughly hostile, our Labour Recruitment began conscripting camels and donkeys. Again remember that we were in the middle of a death struggle in which every one was preoccupied. We let ignorant young subalterns gather up the necessary animals in Egypt. They had to work through local intermediaries, who handed to the *fellah* one-third of the price which they received from the Government, and when the *fellah* cried out they told them that it was the 'wicked English' who once again were to blame. As a climax we began enforced levies for the Red Cross. Imagine the wonderful Anglo-Saxon lack of imagination, collecting for the Red Cross in the Land of the Crescent.

"All these matters were real grievances, and at the end of them all came Wilsonism and the doctrine of self-determination. It captured this country like a disease. Egyptians actually believed that all business had been suspended at the Versailles Conference in order that Egypt's case might be considered. The disillusionment at the end of it all led to the rebellion of 1919."

"And what of the future?" I asked.

"No man is wise enough, or foolish enough, to be

a prophet in this country. By the proclamation of 1923 we gave them a large measure of self-government. But they are not satisfied, and there is always the Sudan to be considered. You must talk to old Saltus [1] about that. Wherever we have left the Government of Egypt it has become a sink of corruption. But who is bold enough to go outside the sentimentalism of self-determination and let us re-establish our sway ? "

" You think, then, that the government of these people by themselves is quite impossible ? "

" No, it is not impossible, and if you are prepared to see them govern by corruption and cruelty you could let them have self-government to-morrow. If you want to see even some of those elements of justice which we as Western people prize, you must go cautiously. You must insist that education shall be a necessary prelude to self-government. Our mistake in the past is that we have often given self-government as an answer to successful revolution. When the Irish had been sufficiently troublesome we acquiesced in the Irish Free State. In Egypt here we came forward with the 1922 plans for self-government after the rebellion of 1919. That is wrong ; we should give self-government only when countries are ready for it. We must give without seeming to be weak, and without being weak. We must be strong without being unjust.

" You cannot save the world by phrases. That is the great fallacy of Wilsonism, the belief in words. Words are a coinage every one possesses, and yet the

[1] See Encounter VIII.

most treacherous exchange in the world. Fine words can hide evil, as a painted veil can mask a leprous face which spreads disease among the innocent who touch it. The romantics still speak of war under the image of a 'sword.' Bright-sworded conflict sounds something trim and clean, and yet behind the lying phrases hides all the scabrous filth of modern warfare. Wilson was in the grip of this treacherous coinage of words. Do you know he once said to a Joint Session of Senate and the House of Representatives, 'Self-determination is not a mere phrase. It is an imperative principle of action which statesmen will henceforth ignore at their peril.' If only he could have realized that facts, and men, and religions, and intrigues and corruptions control us, and that no mere phrase, even if it is dignified with the name of principle, can save us. I suppose this sounds cruel talk to a young man like you, but if Wilson had ever been out here to study actual problems instead of enunciating misty phrases, he would have realized the truth of what I am saying.

"To me it is just this. Once we Anglo-Saxon people believed in ourselves and our mission. We thought that we were doing a big job in the East, and doing it fairly well. Since the war we have lived in a miasma of introspection and inertia. The responsibilities are with us still, and added to them, redoubled responsibilities at home. England is in the throes. No one seems to care; but she is, and the enigma which blackens the whole future is how she will come out of it all."

ENCOUNTER VII

WITH THE MAN WHO KNEW: CAIRO

IT was better port than I had tasted since my travels began, and the saddle of mutton, the *pièce de résistance* in a perfectly ordered meal, had melted with a warm succulence in my mouth. I looked at his smiling face through the light which silk-shaded lamps gave dimly to the room. What and who he was I did not know. An observer of Egypt with some semi-official status, I gathered; but of even that I was never sure. Of all the men I had met in Egypt he alone seemed happy, and yet, like all smiling Englishmen abroad, he could have told a tale of woe had he wished. He had had malaria three times, dysentery once, and in the middle of an Egyptian crisis he had risen from a bed of typhoid at a call from the Government, who appealed to him as the only man to whom the Egyptians would listen. But he had told no tale of woe that night. One gay stream of talk: the amours of Egyptian politicians, the latest tales from the Turf Club, how Ailver, a pro-Egyptian, had insisted on living in the Mouski Hotel, and had found in the morning that all his clothes were stolen, so that he had been forced to dress in sheets and blankets and,

disguised as an Arab, hail an *arabia* in Mouski Street. At last the stream of talk, which I had tried vainly to divert into other channels, was at an end, and I was wondering if he would tell me anything of the country he knew so well.

He touched the roses in the centre of the table. "I have them sent on ice from England," he said. "They have roses out here, but they don't smell."

I looked at the luxuriant masses of red and white, as fresh as if they had just been cut in an English garden. I admired them; but if only he would talk of *fellahin* instead of roses! We were silent.

"It's so nice of you to come here and study the country," he said. "Let's go and have some coffee."

We passed into his drawing-room, lit by one silk-shaded lamp which showed up the old Egyptian brasses and trays as they gleamed between the roomy settees. A servant brought in Persian coffee and liqueurs and the post.

"Persian coffee! How stupid of me. You must be sick of it. I suppose every Egyptian politician you have met during these last months has preceded his lucubrations by insisting that you drink Persian coffee. You shall have good black coffee to-night as we drink it in England."

"Please don't trouble . . ." I began.

"No," he insisted, "black coffee; and do you want milk? Are you a black or a white? All the world is black or white. Not racially, I mean, but in its attitude to coffee."

"I'm a black," I said.

"I'm so glad," he murmured. "Milk is a dese-

cration to coffee. It makes it look like cocoa. A Corona? May I look at these letters for a moment?" He opened them carelessly and laid them down one by one. I was struggling meanwhile to invent some opening by which I could entrap him as soon as he had finished into serious conversation. The last letter was being opened, and I was still racking my brain unsuccessfully for a lead. He took a card from a large, official-looking envelope.

"The M.C.C.," he said, "acknowledge my subscription and send me my card for the next year. One misses cricket here; polo and tennis and racing are all very well in their way, but cricket is a game apart. Do you know Lord's?"

"I've watched the game from the shilling stands," I said, "and duly admired the élite in the members' enclosure. But about the *fellahin*; do you think their treatment . . ." He insinuated himself gently into the middle of my sentence.

". . . I wonder if I shall ever see Hobbs make another century. It's strange how the popularity of cricket is falling off. The crowd likes football—a vulgar game. It only serves to show once again that democracy is always wrong."

I thought I saw an opening.

"Then you would not approve of any attempt to democratize this country?"

"I will come to that in a moment," he said, smiling, "but do allow me a brief space for sentimentality. Here is the coffee. . . . I've taught Mahmud to make it myself. A great art, the right brewing of black coffee.

"We were talking of cricket. Have you ever noticed how all mystics seem to have loved cricket? Francis Thompson used to spend all his time watching the game at Old Trafford when he should have been busy in the dissecting-room at Manchester University. Then there is Mr. Jack Squire, among our moderns, and Mr. Edmund Blunden: they both love the game. I wish they would write about it." He paused; but how was one to lead from Mr. Squire and Mr. Blunden to democracy and Egypt?

"Do you think all this Western education, all these Western games, suit the Egyptians?" I began desperately.

"The Egyptians, like the poor, will always be with us," he smiled back at me, "so they can wait until we finish about cricket. Now I often wish John Donne had written a poem about cricket. He might even have paralleled the movement of the soul in the world to the movement of a team in the field. And there is Shakespeare. What could Shakespeare not have made of cricket. . . . But I suppose you must feel, like Polonius, that we've had rather too much of this. I'm sure you really want to talk about Egypt, don't you? Ask me any questions you like, and I'll do my best to answer."

My hour had come at last. I would open with something on which he could not hedge—the Capitulations. Here was a definite legal matter, the fact that the Egyptian police had no right over the persons and property of foreigners, who could only be proceeded against by the assistance of their consul.

"Capitulations," he laughed, in answer to my

question, "*Cat*ipulations I always call them. I used to have a flat in the Sharia Maghraby on the first floor. There was a grating outside the building, and one day a most inconsiderate cat fell down that grating and died. I told you it was summer?—need I tell you more? In two days that cat was unpleasant. It seemed at first that it would be an easy matter to remove the beast. But I found that the only way to get at the grating was through the ground-floor flat, which belonged to a Syrian. He was in Luxor. The house itself belonged to an Italian who had gone back to Europe for the warm weather. I tackled the Egyptian police, who told me that they had absolutely no jurisdiction unless I could get the permission of the Syrian or the Italian. It was illegal for them to touch the property or persons of any foreigners guarded by the Capitulations. They could not touch anything in the house or near it without written permission. I explained that the Italian and the Syrian were away, and that the cat was making itself more felt every day. No, nothing could be done until the Italian and the Syrian came back, unless I assembled the Syrian and the Italian consuls and got their permission."

"And did you do that?"

"Not exactly. I endured it for two or three days more, and then I decided that I must remove that cat or shut up my flat and go to Shepheard's. So I invited the Syrian and Italian to dinner, and had the table set near my open window. Somehow, between them they had got that cat removed before

we got to the end of the soup. That's all I know about Capitulations. Try me with something else."

On current politics perhaps he would be less evasive.

"What," I asked, "did you think of the cabinet Zaghlul had before he resigned?"

"Charming fellows," he replied, "all of them. Perfectly charming. I remember once, after one of Saad Zaghlul's speeches in the parliament—'barleymon' they seem to pronounce it—they asked me to tea, the whole lot of them, up at the House of the Nations. Saad was too ill to be there himself, but all the rest were present. An enormous room, furnished in a heavy Western way with many sideboards and chests, and in the middle an enormous table. Once I had looked at that table I realized that we in England do not understand hospitality where quantity and variety of food is concerned. Enormous silver salvers heaped with sweet biscuits and cakes filled the centre of the table. Around these were enormous plates of meat sandwiches, fish sandwiches, paste sandwiches. It looked as if some one had been raiding a *delicatessen* store. Tea was supplied from an urn at one end, and coffee from quart jugs at the other. All this to entertain me, and I seldom eat more than a single biscuit when I do take tea. On this occasion there was no escaping it, for the Pashas crowded my plate with sandwiches and cakes and biscuits until they had built up a small mountain. There were no women present, of course: it was a good Muslim household. I had just acknowledged with as much grace as possible a cup of tea from the gentleman with the urn at

one end, when the gentleman from the other end approached me with a cup of coffee nearly as big as a basin. So there I was with a heap of food before me and with a cup of tea and a cup of coffee one on either side of it. No one else seemed to eat anything."

"And what did they say?" I asked.

"Be reasonable, please," he said. "It's all I ask, be reasonable. Could you have remembered anything that was said if you had seen that plate of food before you? By the time I had nibbled my way through a sandwich the Pashas were crowding round again with dishes of food and salvers to heap my plate higher than before. I felt like a bilious small boy trying to do justice to the last party of the Christmas holidays.

"I remember next to nothing. Fattala Pasha Barakat did most of the talking. He sat opposite me the whole time, an impressive figure, his *tarbush* pushed well back on his head. You've met him perhaps? He's an old landowner who has found political manœuvring a most pleasant game. Dressed in immaculate morning dress, he played with a string of amber beads and told me that he and his associates were the most moral people in Egypt. Beyond the rhetoric of Pasha Barakat, my mind is a complete blank."

"What of the population here?" I asked, trying another opening. "Every one discusses that. The population of this country has nearly doubled in forty years. What is to happen if they go on?"

"The only hopeful thing about this country is

the infant mortality rate. Of course our humanitarians try to decrease it. But fortunately they aren't successful. If they were really successful the story of this country would become tragic. But you've had enough of this gossip. Let's drop in at the Continental-Savoy and see what Europeans really do on their Saturday nights in Egypt."

As he spoke he pressed the bell to order his car, and ten minutes later we were standing at the doorway of the ballroom in the Continental-Savoy. The floor was crowded to its capacity—judges, civil servants, men down from the Sudan on leave, American tourists, youths from the petroleum companies, and as much of beauty as Cairo possessed.

"Here's some one I simply must introduce you to," said my host. "A Miss Waterly, pleasantest girl imaginable, out here to teach in an Egyptian school. Quaint occupation, but she is having the gayest time she could wish. She's coming this way now. Miss Waterly, may I introduce you. . . . Are you free for the next dance? You know I'm too old for it, but my friend here is simply dying for a dance."

Miss Waterly danced well; she was pleasant; possibly she was the "pleasantest girl imaginable"; but when I had disengaged myself from her and left her drinking cocktails with one of her numerous swains, I found that the Man who Knew had disappeared.

* * * * *

When I left Cairo he came to see me off.

"I couldn't find you anywhere that night at the

Continental. Awful crush, wasn't it? I hope you liked Miss Waterly—pleasantest girl imaginable. I hope you have got all you wanted out of this country. Of course it's a very strange place, and it's very difficult when you are as close up to things as you have been. You wait till you are on the boat. Just get a little away from things, and you will see the whole of the Egyptian situation perfectly clearly. Ah, you're beginning to move. . . . Good-bye. Remember, on the boat it will be perfectly clear."

ENCOUNTER VIII

WITH THE OLD RESIDENT: CAIRO

WE were sitting on the tea lawn of the Khedival Sporting Club in Cairo, Saltus, an old British resident in Cairo, and I. Here, by the Nile, the English residents find their social centre, race-courses, polo-grounds, tennis courts and open-air swimming-baths, all in a spot made beautiful with lawns and palm trees. Around us, innumerable clean-groomed, silent Englishmen, with their womenfolk in white dresses carrying gay parasols, drank tea and cursed the machinations of the *tarbush*. One sees the disillusioned official who years ago at Oxford had been a Fabian and a believer in intellectual socialism, and who to-day has no view of life except " that we must stand no nonsense from these Egyptians." By his side, his wife, beautiful and gentle, is sure that she does not want to hurt anyone, but that " John is always right, and really the servants do steal and lie." Near by is the girl just out from England, enjoying the sweet privileges of a country where women are in the minority. She is having a " heady " time, but " these dear boys, one must help them to enjoy themselves so far from home."

At tea we said little, but looked at the fashionable,

laughing crowd of beautiful, correct people around us. Suddenly a kite swooped down to our table and picked two pieces of toast in its beak. The manœuvre was so neatly executed that nothing else was touched, and no tea was spilt. Unfortunately, in his upward flight he found the pieces too heavy, or perhaps too soft. They fell, and watching crows picked them up. It was then that, for the first time, he spoke.

"I suppose you got me out here to talk, and I suppose I ought to know. I've been in it all from the beginning, from the time of the Arabi Revolt in '81. I've served the Government here, and now I am free from them and I can say what I like.

"It is all a matter of fifty years, this modern history of Egypt. I do think that is the main thing to remember, and the essence of the trouble is not the fault of the British or the Egyptians; it lies with the position of this country. We have never been sure whether it was in Europe or in Asia, and the Egyptians themselves don't know. The young effendi likes to be European in some ways; he loves to sit in a café, drink absinthe and pretend he is a Frenchman. Yet fundamentally he is still as Asiatic as ever. The East and the West have never mixed. Look at this city of Cairo! On one side is the Mouski, the Egyptian quarter, Eastern still in manner and spirit. I was down this morning in some of those quiet little streets, barely a yard and a half wide, and it was just the same as when, forty years ago, Blunt and I lodged there. Take an *arabia* in Mouski Street, and in ten minutes you can drive to the middle of a new Cairo, Europeanized, Ismailish Cairo, as Western as London itself.

It is only a few freaks like me who ever really feel happy among the Egyptians; we usually just look at each other from a distance and hate each other.

"The terrible mistake we have made is to thrust our Western education on these people, for whom it is entirely unsuited. Down in the Mouski to-day I saw one of old Abdul's men grinding cinnamon in granite mortars, and the granite stolen years ago from the Pyramids, as old Abdul told me in a confidential moment over a tumblerful of Persian tea.

"He pointed out to me Mahmud, one of his oldest and most trustworthy workmen. Mahmud wore the most beautiful loose-flowing robes and a turban.

"'There is his son,' he said, and he pointed to a young man squatting on the floor of the perfumery store. Young Mahmud had Western clothes—rather over-waisted tweeds and loud, buttoned boots.

"'It is just education and the Government,' old Abdul added solemnly; 'and now Mahmud has no authority over his son, and he does not learn the Koran.'

"Muslim education, whatever it left untaught, did teach morals, and, as an old aunt of mine used to say, 'Morals are so very necessary, especially in hot countries.' And what have we done? First of all we made the same mistake as in India; instead of attempting the difficult task of giving a compulsory education towards literacy to the whole population, we chose the easy task of giving a higher education to a few. We brought out two types of people to manage education here; public-school men and board-school teachers. Of the two, the board-school teachers were

the worse; in fact, a few board-school teachers who gained a big grip on the educational machine have caused us more harm in Egypt than any other group of people. The fault of the board-school men was that they could not tell the difference between a boy in Bermondsey and one in Bedrashein. I have seen them punishing little boys for not being able to flourish on the methods of English grammar learnt in the Borough Training Colleges of the 'eighties.

"The mistakes of the public-school men were less obvious. The public school tradition has stood for three things: compulsory sport, a rough code of morals arising from the sport, and a type of intellectual exercise—I mean Latin and Greek—intended in the first place to stimulate the brains of the leisured classes. The public school boy has usually brought all three things with him into Egypt. The compulsory sport has had a good effect. The morality attached to it has never been adopted by the Egyptian boy. The intellectual exercises he has been made to do have been sterile and not in keeping with his practical needs. He has been taught a little English, a little arithmetic, and a silly smattering of English literature. From that he probably goes on to science or medicine.

"I remember, when it was all starting, I asked an English school inspector, 'For what purpose are you educating these boys?' and he replied, 'I don't know; we are just educating them.' If the Government did not know the end of education, the boys soon made it clear to them: the *Nirvana* of the educated was a Government clerkship. At first there was plenty of room in the Egyptian Civil Service for

these half-baked boys, and every one was happy. But what began in the prostitution of learning ended in the creation of a half-educated unemployed. It is these crowds of emasculated intellectuals which swarm the towns that have been the fodder for all nationalist rebellions in Egypt. The bulk of the country, well over nine-tenths, is still a primitive peasantry that can neither read nor write. They have joined in rebellions because they had genuine grievances. I dare say you know that story though."

"Is there any hope for education in Egypt?" I said.

"No!" he replied, "not at the moment. You see, since the Proclamation of 1923, the education system has been in Egyptian hands. They won't do much. There won't be decent education in Egypt until the little native *Kuttab*, the village school, is turned into a centre of simple culture where the whole village can learn to read and find something decent to read once it has learnt. I suppose, though, that that is just a dream of mine."

"A. said that you could tell me something of the Sudan."

"I suppose he said that because he was afraid to tell you anything himself. We are in the Sudan by right of conquest. It is true that the Egyptians helped us, but without our aid they would have been helpless against the Sudanese. Any Egyptian is afraid of any Sudanese, and that on all occasions. The Egyptian claim to the Sudan, as if it were part of Egypt, is absurd. You may ask what our motives are of remaining in the Sudan. As I see, we have two

motives. First of all, why are Europeans in Africa at all? Primarily for commercial expansion and to gain raw materials. If that aim can be justified anywhere it can be justified in the Sudan, where you have an immense country peopled by a primitive people, mentally quite incapable of making use of their own resources. I know your socialists and your sentimentalists will condemn the so-called exploitation of the Sudan, but men of our race have shown that fine long-staple cotton can be grown there. If their experiments can be developed, the Sudanese will grow as wealthy as the Egyptians are now. Who knows, one day the Sudanese may, by their share in this very prosperity, make their way to education and self-government, as the Egyptians eventually will do."

"Do the Egyptians object to that idea of an ultimate rule of the Sudan by the Sudanese?"

"Emphatically. You see, their population has nearly doubled during the last forty years, and if we continue all this sentimental, humanitarian work it is likely to double again. Egypt wants to be sure of an outlet for her surplus population, and though Egyptians would rather go to prison than to the Sudan, her politicians think that the pressure of circumstances may finally compel the peasants to choose the less desirable alternative. More than that, if we start teaching the Sudanese prosperity and save Sudanese babies as we have been saving Egyptian ones, the Sudanese will one day swamp the Egyptians and conquer them, as every race that has fought them in earnest has conquered them."

"You suggested," I said, "that there was a second reason why we hold on to the Sudan."

"I said so, but I had better admit straight away that I am guessing. We have given Egypt a very large measure of independence, and yet it is essential strategically that we should be able to bring Egypt to heel just whenever we like. It may seem brutal to put it like that, but what sane power is going to let the safety of the Suez depend on a thousand defensive alliances with Zaghlul Pasha or with any other Egyptian leader? The Sudan controls the waters of the Nile, and for that reason he who is master of the Sudan is master of Egypt. It is a threat we may never have to use, but it is a useful one to have when you are dealing with a race such as the Egyptians.

"I suppose all this seems strange to you. You are probably one of those travelling tourists who believe in self-government and the right treatment of subject people and all that. Come out here and try to do it! Egyptians don't believe in democracy. Leave them to themselves, and to-morrow this country would be a corrupt oligarchy of some two per cent. who would virtually enslave the rest of the people in order to enrich themselves. It just comes to this: do you believe that our own forms of Western government are better than the personal tyrannies which pass for government in the East? If you do, you must be prepared to assist to put those forms of government into practice in Eastern countries. If you believe in self-government you must be prepared to see people govern themselves with cruelty, corruption and tyranny. It is absurd to say that our only

mission as a race in the East has been a commercial one. No one can look at the results and make that charge with any degree of honesty. Ultimately we may inculcate our ideas so far that all Eastern peoples can govern themselves; but come here among these people and find how difficult a task it is."

ENCOUNTER IX

WITH SAAD ZAGHLUL PASHA

HOW exactly I came to meet him I cannot remember; my main impression is that for many days I drank innumerable coffees with an incredible number of relations and friends until, at last, one of them said that I might see "Saad Zaghlul." First there was a young effendi, one of Zaghlul's secretaries, who talked endlessly one night on the terrace of Shepheard's Hotel. He was a romantic young Egyptian who had divided his adolescent years between Paris and Oxford. It was after midnight when he told me that he felt quite sure the "great one" was too ill to see me. The hours that I had listened to his rhetoric were all in vain. He did the rhetoric quite well, and gave the appearance of sincerity. "Egypt was once the mother of all civilizations: for centuries she has been sleeping and her soul has been enslaved. But she is waking, waking from her long dream. Soon she will be the leader of all the world's civilizations again." He meant it all, I believe, though when one asked him to relate his vision to the lives of the illiterate *fellahin* in their mud huts along the Nile Basin he was silent. As we parted I put my question again:

"Is there no possible chance of seeing Zaghlul Pasha?"

"He is too ill. He would be in bed in his pyjamas. He could say nothing. That surely is not worth while?"

I was not so sure, but the young effendi was firm.

My next encounter was with a relation, a nephew, I think. He had been to England, and before we could discuss anything else he produced a fat packet of letters containing all the invitations he had received during his stay in Europe. All these I must read before we could discuss anything else. Once this was done we settled down to Persian coffees and talk about politics. I have seldom met a man so effusive: he went on and on; but when at last I asked if Saad Zaghlul might be seen he became adamant.

Saad? It was impossible! And why should I see Saad? Had he not himself told me all that there was to know? Yet if I must see some one else he would arrange for me to meet a few members of Saad's late Cabinet. . . .

And the next day I met them. It was an Egyptian tea-party, arranged in pseudo-Western style, where ten times more food was supplied than the party could possibly have consumed. There were four ministers, I believe, and an interpreter. What they said I never knew, for they all talked more or less at once, two in Arabic, one in French and one in English. I sat silent and listened to their voluble inarticulateness, hoping that some time it might end. Perhaps it was my silence that impressed them, for suddenly I found that they were no longer talking at me but

discussing something among themselves in Arabic. I caught at times the word "Saad," but nothing else was intelligible. At last I found the interpreter addressing me and saying that their Excellencies had decided that I should see Saad Zaghlul, and that the time should be at noon, on the morrow.

So at noon I made my way to the House of the Nations, Zaghlul Pasha's enormous private residence in Cairo which had, from time to time, been the centre of many a noisy demonstration. I was shown at once into Saad Zaghlul's study, and told that soon "His Excellency" would receive me. The study itself showed everywhere an attempt to imitate Western fashions: the total effect was rather like a Bloomsbury boarding-house. Heavy velvet curtains kept out the beautiful winter sun; antimacassars covered the profusion of plush chairs and sofas. At one end of the room was a desk, and by its side a bookcase, empty except for a copy of Nesfield's *English Grammar*. It was a shock to find here, in Zaghlul's residence in Cairo, the yellow covers of a book which one had used at school in England. On the desk a large copy of the Koran stood open, as if some one had been reading in it before I had entered.

Soon he came in, looking bent and ill, yet still by far the most impressive Egyptian I have seen. He looks very much like a European: his flushed asthmatic face is as fair and ruddy as an English farmer's after a day in the fields. His clothes were Western, except that as headgear he wore the inevitable *tar-*

bush, pushed back at an impossible angle upon his head. His long life of agitation has not been without its effects upon him; his lined face bears signs of weariness and something akin to anger. His whole career has concentrated on resistance; his laughter arises only from the sardonic; his vigour expresses itself in angry retrospect and quick moments of passionate feeling. At times the clumsiness of his movements, emphasized by his long arms and large ungainly hands, betrays his *fellahin* origin. Yet whatever is to be one's verdict upon him, here is Egypt's outstanding personality, and a man who gathers into his own life the whole history of his country for the last four decades.

And one could not help thinking of that past. Here was the young *fellah* who had fought with Arabi; the young student who, without family or patronage, had won credit for himself at the Muslim University of *Al Azhar*, and finally, through that, a seat on the Bench. Lord Cromer thought so highly of him that in 1905 he made him a Minister of Public Instruction. It was Lord Cromer, too, who wrote of him: "Unless I am much mistaken, a career of great usefulness lies before the present Minister of Education, Saad Zaghlul Pasha. He possesses all the qualities to serve his country. He is honest; he is capable; he was the courage of his convictions. These are high qualifications. He should go far."

Lord Cromer would have been surprised could he have seen the development of his protégé. Saad Zaghlul came to believe that Egypt could gain nothing from reliance on England, but that everything might

be achieved from an attitude of uncompromising nationalism. With that end he agitated, and instead of working with the British for Egypt's development he became a consistent obstructionist. His agitation was well served by the real hardships which the peasant *fellahin* had suffered during the war; and by March 1919 Saad Zaghlul had fanned agitation into open revolution. Twice he and his followers were banished; twice they were recalled. Finally, a wave of popular sentiment and clever electioneering took him to the Premiership of Egypt under the Milner Settlement of 1922. He had time to give Egypt a year of misgovernment before the assassination of the Sirdar, in November 1924, threw him from office.

It was at this time, some fortnight after the Sirdar's death, that I saw him. He spoke to me slowly in French, as a man ill and beaten. His mind was not free to think of large issues: he could see only the tactics of the immediate situation and the grievances under which he conceived himself to be suffering.

"Ramsay MacDonald had deceived him . . . Lord Allenby had deceived him . . . the Residency had deceived him . . . the murder-gang on his own side had deceived . . . he was tired, very tired of it all."

"When I told MacDonald that I wanted the complete sovereign independence of Egypt and the Sudan I did not mean that I must have it. I was prepared to discuss and bargain."

The *naïveté* of this confession reminded one of the practice of carpet-sellers in the Mouski: they unroll their wares and name a price, but never for a moment

do they expect you to consider seriously the price first named. One wondered whether this Egyptian delegation in England had not brought with it into diplomacy a bazaar mentality, which necessitated that some impossible claim should be urged before serious discussion could begin. Mr. MacDonald, in a common-sense Western way, had taken their first extravagant request, as they unrolled their wares, to be a serious statement of their demands.

I cannot help contrasting Zaghlul Pasha with Gandhi, whom I saw but a few months later. They had this in common, that they opposed British rule; but with that the similarity ends. Gandhi, as he squatted on the floor swathed in his brown blankets, seemed free from any contact with the West. Yet when he began to speak he showed that he had at command a rich English vocabulary and a pleasant, persuasive accent. In India our culture has penetrated deeply, and, Swaraj or no Swaraj, we shall leave permanently a deep impress on that great half-continent. Gandhi did not talk in the terms of tactics: certainly his politics were mingled with mysticism and idealism, but he held in his mind a large vision of fundamental principles which isolated incidents could not displace.

Zaghlul spoke in French, and one was reminded at once that Britain's contact with Egypt has been far more recent than her association with India. Egypt has been influenced by Europe rather than by England, and whatever may be British influence to-day, the French were there before us. But the fundamental difference between the two men was that

while Gandhi never talked of tactics, Zaghlul could talk of nothing else. He was a party leader, not a thinker, and the larger vision was clouded by his perpetual insistence on the machinery for strife.

I asked Zaghlul how he would deal with his domestic problems once he had ceased to strive against the British : how would he deal with his own De Valeras of El Watan, or the ingloriously active party of the ex-Khedive ? He had no answer : it had not been thought out. I asked him further of Egypt's great social problems : her infantile death-rate of thirty per cent. of the total number of annual births ; her population problem—for her people increase despite these terrible ravages of disease. It had not been thought out. For two hours he spoke, and yet that is all that remains to record : bitterness and an absence of long views. Elements of greatness undoubtedly lingered around him, but a greatness that had grown sour.

I went away from Zaghlul saddened by the waste of human energies in the world. If only the romantic dream of the young fellah and this force of his later stubbornness could combine to make a new Egypt and solve her problems . . . but " if only "—what is the use of " if only " ? Here are the men as they are, and these are the passions and loyalties to which they hold.

ENCOUNTER X

WITH DAS DUKERJEE DAS AND GUBBINS

DAS DUKERJEE DAS was his name, a second-class graduate of the University of Oxford, previously of a good English public school. He had spent eight years in England in the process of being educated as an English gentleman should, and I met him first on a boat bound for Bombay. Das Dukerjee Das's father was a merchant prince, one of the largest jute-brokers in Calcutta, a man whom many respected for his wealth and power; and Das was returning to his own country after this long exile to bring all his modern Western knowledge to the benefit of the business. He was dressed in the most exquisite brown tweeds that I have ever seen, with socks to match and suède shoes; his delicate brown fingers would hold his long, thin, amber cigarette-holder, and he would talk with that very Oxford accent which it had cost him so much to attain. Possibly he was over-elegant and effeminately immaculate, but still he was a thing of beauty and very popular on the boat. He played bridge admirably, and when the party was tired of playing Das could always oblige with a few sleight-of-hand tricks with the cards. Deck games he played magnificently, and when his white flannels displayed the slim duskiness of his features he looked certainly

the most handsome man on the whole ship ; and much was his company sought. Besides, Das Dukerjee Das had not spent all his time in Europe obtaining that second-class degree of the University of Oxford ; he could speak with intimate knowledge of life on the Lido, of the methods of the *salon privé* at Monte Carlo, and of the grill-room at the Ritz.

Young Gubbins found Das quite an education, for Gubbins knew little of Europe except for a week-end in Nice, a fortnight in Paris and several short trips to Dieppe. Young Gubbins had never been to India before, and he was rather full of the clerkship which he was to occupy in a shipping office in Calcutta ; but with Das he would be silent and listen to ways of life with a large " L " as it is lived on both sides of the Suez.

" And did you really pay three guineas for a meal there ? " said Gubbins.

" My dear fellow, that was without wines," said Das, and added, " I think that the most interesting and extraordinary party that it was ever my honour to give in Oxford was after I had been awarded my degree of B.A. I called the chaps into breakfast, and do you know what I gave them, my dear Gubbins ? "

Dear Gubbins did not know.

" I gave them champagne and plovers' eggs and thin slices of Bermaline bread. I have reasons to believe that they still talk of that party in the University of Oxford. Splendid chaps all of them."

Oxford was a name to Gubbins : he had never seen champagne drunk except on the stage, and he was duly impressed, and after sitting for a few moments in a respectful silence he said :

"Did you ever play cricket?"

"It was an honour, dear Gubbins, for me that I was once selected to play for the University of Oxford. It was two years ago now; the season that Eric was captain. His father is Lord M——, you know, the Governor of B——; perhaps you have met him?"

Gubbins had never met Lord M—— nor Eric, and reluctantly he admitted as much.

"Splendid fellow Eric, my dear Gubbins, splendid fellow. He took me once to their place up in Cumberland for a little shooting. It was there that I met Peggy, his sister, a peach of a girl. She comes out this year, I think."

At this moment the Misses Wilnever, two young ladies of nearly thirty, ardent admirers of Das, approached the two men. It was to Das that they addressed their question, and he arose full of chivalry.

"Charmed, Miss Wilnever," said Das; "Gubbins and I are overjoyed. We will be delighted to assist you at the bull-board. Splendid game, bull-board. I remember once . . ."

* * * * *

I also made the acquaintance of Gubbins on that boat bound for Bombay, and I promised to look him up later when I should reach Calcutta. So on a brilliant winter morning I waited for Gubbins outside one of the Calcutta clubs. I stood watching that entertaining mixture of bullock carts and automobiles which entangle themselves one with the other on the Calcutta streets. And I waited.

Gubbins was late.

Suddenly, through the throng on the pavement, I saw

a face that I seemed to know, not Gubbins' face, but that of an Indian whom I felt sure I had met somewhere before. He came nearer. Yes! I did know him; it was Das Dukerjee Das. He pushed his way through the crowd towards me. He still wore that brown tweed coat which we had all so much admired on the boat, though now its fine tailored lines had been crumpled and lost. The rest of his Western kit had disappeared; instead of those trousers whose crease had been so irreproachably immaculate he wore a white Indian cloth; his legs were bare and sandals had replaced the brown suède shoes. Nor was it his clothes alone that had changed, for the easy confidence of the Das I had met had disappeared into the shy diffidence of a Hindu boy. He seemed uncertain if he would speak to me, but I hailed him with enthusiasm and he came.

"I did not expect to see you here," he said. His eyes looked shiftily at me and then looked away. His hair, once so carefully oiled, was carelessly tumbled now and his teeth smeared with red by betel-nut. He was chewing betel-nut as he spoke, though he tried to conceal it. I told him that I had travelled across Northern India and found his country magnificent. After that we were silent for a moment, both of us fidgeting in a stupid self-consciousness.

"Are you enjoying it here?" I asked.

"It is all right," he said listlessly. "I am not very busy. This afternoon I am going to the Calcutta Races."

"Calcutta Races?" I said. "Why, Gubbins and I are going there. Let's all go in a party."

At once he became abashed.

"Oh, no," he said, "perhaps I will not go. They may find that they are too busy at the office. Are you waiting for Gubbins? I must go; I am in a great hurry."

"But here is Gubbins," I said. "You must wait to have a talk with him; he'll be so delighted to see you."

And there was Gubbins pacing along towards us. Gubbins, too, had changed in these three brief months. He wore a bright white topee and elegant cream ducks. Somehow his walk had more confidence, that indefinable elbowing quality, and certainly he looked more sure of himself.

Gubbins and the Indian looked at each other, and both neglected me.

"Hello!" said Gubbins.

"Good afternoon," said Das, and his eyes looked shiftily up the street.

There was a pause.

"You've settled down, I suppose?" said Gubbins.

"Yes," said Das, "but I remember something most important that I must do at my father's office." And a moment later he was swallowed up in the crowd.

* * * * *

As we walked into the Club together I said to Gubbins:

"Why didn't you ask him into the Club? He's really going to the Races this afternoon."

"My dear man," said Gubbins, "we can't have anything to do with those fellows while we are out here. Besides, this is a show for pukka sahibs. Of course, in England it is different."

ENCOUNTER XI

WITH GANDHI

I MET him very early one morning in Delhi. Of all the world's celebrities he, perhaps, is the most approachable. You write as a perfect stranger to tell him that you wish to see him; he replies in his own handwriting: "My dear friend,—Do come and see me. Monday is my day of silence. I can speak to no one then, but after that . . ."

I found him squatting in a corner of the floor, in Eastern fashion, covered, except for his head, with rough blankets of brown and white, a complete contrast in his simplicity to all the pomp that is symbolized in Delhi's official residences, with their myriads of red-coated servants.

As I entered he rose and, with a smile on his worn, ascetic face, stretched a brown hand out from among the blankets to greet me. Small, shrunken figure, he seems the negation of all that the West calls personality. I wish Mussolini and Gandhi could be brought face to face: just a photograph of them standing side by side would be indefinitely suggestive of the eternal contrasts in life.

He apologized that he was in the middle of breakfast, and sinking down into the blankets began eating

his meal of rice and fresh grapes from dishes placed before him on the floor. Around him were piles of telegrams and letters, and on both sides sat *chudder*-clothed secretaries waiting for his instructions.

A strange effect of the incongruous lingers around that talk which I had with him. I put my questions to a small, brown, close-cropped, spectacled head which peered out from among the blankets, and the brown head answered my questions in a perfectly enunciated English of cultured intonation. Little that he told me was new; but its effect was different from that of the printed word. However divergent reports may be, the man himself gives an impression of holiness. Here is one who is above the meaner vices: self-seeking, dishonesty, vanity, and even anger seemed purged out of him. He is an idealist, a philosopher, with something of the spirituality of a great religious leader; and yet at the same time he is shrewd, aware of the values of the world, capable of estimating dispassionately the probable success of his theories. In the middle of one discussion of abstract themes he said: "They told me that Lord Reading was a good man, and that he would change India; but I said to them: 'Are the many civil servants beneath Lord Reading good men? For it is not the man at the head here who counts, but the numerous and permanent men beneath him.'" In the quietude of the room, and still with the munching of grapes, the voice says: "I believe that all life is one: human life and the life of the lower orders. I would not harm you because you are a living being

as I am. If a man should believe in force, it is right that he use force: I believe not in force but in the community of life."

Politically his power may rise and wane, but with the masses he is for ever Mahatma, the Saint. As he moves through India they crowd to see him, bow down before him, and worship.

My talk with him seems in retrospect to have been an exchange of commonplaces. I told him of what I had seen in Bombay and in the Deccan, the poverty and distress of the peasants.

"What," I said, "does Swaraj and the Nationalist movement hope to do for these masses of Indian cultivators, and for the factory workers?"

"I have no easy solution," he replied. "I once believed in complete non-co-operation with you British, and even now I have no hope in the reformed councils. My solution for the Indian problem is in this room. There it is. Over there in that corner." And he pointed to a hand-loom which stood opposite to him. "I would be prepared to enter the reformed councils," he said, "if through them I could obtain a prohibitive import tariff on all foreign cloth. Then the Indian peasant would be able to return to his old industry. We should hear the glad sound of millions of hand-looms all over India."

This is an old argument of Gandhi's, and one which has appealed to idealists all over the world. It is one with severe practical disadvantages. Even if Indian hand industries could free themselves by tariffs from foreign competition, they would still have to compete with all the native factories which are

growing up so rapidly in the country. I brought this consideration to his notice.

"What," I asked, "will you do with the factories which exist in India? How can your peasant-spinners compete with them? Would you pass a law prohibiting any factories in India?"

"To prohibit," he said, "is not my way. The factories must go on for a time and the peasant will suffer, perhaps he will suffer for years; but in the end he will triumph."

Farther than that he would not discuss the matter, and I realized how intractable this idealist must have been to the British administrators who tried to cope with him. Spiritual man that he is, his mind dwells somewhere away from realities. He seems to imagine that India is a country of three hundred million virtuous idealists like himself, prepared, if need be, for suffering and starvation for the furtherance of abstract principles. But the Indian peasant is too close to the facts of poverty to be swayed for long by idealisms which bear no substantial fruit.

It was this same mood which returned later when we discussed Afghanistan. He could see no necessity for a frontier army. "For," he said, "the Afghan is a God-fearing man." If pressed further he would only say, "This is my belief," or "This is my faith."

Argument could be carried no farther, and I turned to another topic. There was sitting in Delhi at that moment an All-Unity Conference, to bring agreement between the Hindu and Muslim elements in the Swaraj party. It is difficult to exaggerate the bitter-

ness which exists at times between these two great religious communities. The intensity of disagreement had at that moment been increased by the Shuddai movement, the attempt to convert certain Muslim communities to Hinduism. Gandhi's eyes twinkled at the mention of the Conference, and his whole face seemed to suggest a mood of humorous resignation before its probable failure.

"Put on one side for a moment," I said, "your difficulties with the British. Is it not possible that one day your Hindu-Muslim differences may lead to civil war?"

"Even that is possible," he replied; "and if the British left India to-morrow there would be civil war. But I would prefer to see civil war than to see the British here. Civil war may be necessary before India is one. Was it not necessary in America? I work to heal our differences, but I know how deep they are."

I asked him what were his plans for the future; for at that moment he seemed, as he still is, politically at a discount.

"I do not believe in the tactics of politics," he said. "I only believe in this faith of mine for India's future. For that I must work. I have organized my life to work for that; and it is my faith. I believe in a regenerated India free from foreign influence, with a peasantry which can respect itself, and which is busy and happy. I believe as firmly in that as the early Christians believed in the second coming of Christ. One must have faith, and one must always live in that faith."

As I left Gandhi I began to realize how two personalities are combined within one man. In the first place there is a politician who cannot picture actual conditions. Gandhi does not know the India that really exists : he is only aware of an ideal India, a figment of his own mind. The dream of the ideal peasantry working at their hand-looms is a beautiful dream, and nothing more. The Indian peasantry, on Gandhi's own admission, no longer believes in that dream. " I promised them too much," he confessed, " and they have grown a little distrustful." The intelligentsia of India has never believed in Gandhi the politician, although they have found him on several occasions a symbol useful for their own purposes. It is this political Gandhi who troubled the Indian scene a few years ago ; and it is this Gandhi who stands to-day discredited even by his own party.

Then there is another Gandhi, a man of humility and of a pure life, a man above the self-seeking motives which seem to be the besetting sin of politicians of all ages. Here is a man of high caste who will eat with the " untouchables," those outcastes despised by his fellow-countrymen. Here, too, is the man whose saintly distrust of violence has made him the spiritual leader of the Indian masses. It is this Gandhi who reminds one again of those finest things in the Christian faith : the doctrines of benevolence and love. It is as if this Hindu were teaching to the West the finest elements in the faith which it professes to possess. But let no idealists in the West condemn the British administration that has had to

oppose Gandhi's schemes, unless they would be prepared equally to listen to some English saint who, for the vision of "England's green and pleasant land," would wish to throw all our industrial cities into the sea.

In dealing with saints, as with sinners, we must be prepared to do to ourselves as we would wish to do to others. Gandhi is the Tolstoy of India: a man excellent in himself, but whose way of life leads to a storm.

ENCOUNTER XII

WITH THE STORY OF LAL HAHBIB

THIS is the story of Lal Hahbib as I heard it one day in the High Court of Appeal, in a town in Northern India, before two English justices. I had wandered into the courts one day to see something of the English legal system in India, and by a happy chance I suddenly met the Chief Justice. Englishmen in India combine a complete contempt for cold-weather visitors with a charming courtesy to any specimens of those despicable vagrants whom they may meet. The Chief Justice took me to his house, concealed his contempt, and showed me to the guest-room.

"Stay with us a few days," he said, "and see what you can." And so I stayed. We talked that night of England, of home politics, Labour Governments and dole-systems. India was a subject barred, and it was late in the night when I found my way to my room. *Chotahasri* of tea and toast and banana, that strange Anglo-Indian substitute for early morning tea, came at half-past seven, and at half-past eight I faced the Chief Justice at the breakfast table.

"If you expect me to talk to you," he said firmly, "you are mistaken. The only way to find out any-

thing about this country is to look and see. Come with me to the courts to-day."

Later in the day I found myself sitting in the High Court of Appeal behind the two English justices, and that is how I came to hear the story of Lal Hahbib.

* * * * *

Lal Hahbib was a Hindu who had a shop in Delhi. He also had, unfortunately, a gun and some cartridges. Riots arose in Delhi between Hindus and Muhammedans. One day, by the water-fount in front of Lal Hahbib's shop, Hindus and Muhammedans began quarrelling, and in the middle of the quarrel Lal Hahbib fired a shot, or, maybe, more than one shot, into the middle of the crowd. So far everybody agreed about the story of Lal Hahbib; but for details we must go to eye-witnesses, make them each swear by the various things that they hold sacred to tell the whole truth, and ask them what they saw Lal Hahbib do that day.

The Muhammedans who oppose Lal Hahbib give evidence for the Crown prosecution. They swear profusely and with many periphrases that they can tell the whole story, and that they will not deviate one word from the truth.

"Your lordships! A few peaceful Muhammedans were drawing water at the well before Lal Hahbib's house. They were not hostile. They just drew water, nothing more. As they were peacefully working, Hindus in great numbers gathered round and abused them. But the peace-loving Muhammedans took no notice. Suddenly Lal Hahbib appeared on the balcony of his house, carrying his gun, and

shouted '*Maro! Maro!*' (Kill! Kill!). Lal Hahbib then fired again and again, and many Muhammedans fell."

What would you do if you were their lordships? Is it not a simple story of crime, and is not Lal Hahbib a palpable villain caught red-handed? But let us hear what the defence has to say.

* * * * *

The witnesses for the defence are all Hindus like Lal Hahbib himself.

"Your lordships!" they say. "There had been rioting in Delhi and many Muhammedans had been attacking the Hindus. Now, your lordships, there is a lane by Lal Hahbib's house called 'The Lane of the Mosque,' and in this lane no one lives except the Muhammedans.

"On that morning a few of us Hindus were talking to Lal Hahbib quietly outside his house. Suddenly a crowd of Muhammedans armed with *shatis* came running from the Lane of the Mosque crying, '*Maro! Maro!* Kill the Hindus! Kill the Hindus! Rob Lal Hahbib's shop and kill him!' Poor Lal Hahbib was very frightened, for he had a safe with much money in his shop. He ran into his shop, up the stairs, seized his gun, and fired one shot into the air to frighten the Muhammedans in the square."

My Lords of Appeal, what will you decide now? Lal Hahbib himself clings to the same story as the Hindu witnesses for the defence, and it is a story which disagrees in every detail from that of the prosecution, except that every one seems prepared to admit that at least one shot was fired.

But, it will be urged, there are corpses, and many wounded bodies: how can Lal Hahbib account for those by a single shot, and that fired into the air?

The defence hurries to answer these crucial questions.

"It was the wicked Muhammedans, your lordships. We told you that there had been rioting in Delhi. Rioting means dead bodies and wounded bodies. So what do the wicked Muhammedans do? They are determined to kill Lal Hahbib, but they are afraid to do it themselves; they wish your lordships to do it. So they bring dead bodies and wounded bodies of Muhammedans who had been rioting in other parts of the town and place them by the water-trough outside Lal Hahbib's house. They are very wicked, these Muhammedans, your lordships."

There is your problem, my Lords of Appeal: solve it as best you can.

I listened to the story of Lal Hahbib for two days in the High Court of that Northern Indian town. The case had already been tried two or three times in lower courts, and such were the contradictions of the witnesses that all of them, defence and prosecution alike, had been committed for perjury by the judge of the lower court. Not only did they contradict one another, but with naïve insistence did they contradict their own previous statements.

The evidence had been given and re-given in the lower courts. All that we heard in the Court of Appeal was the argument of counsel for each side and their summary of the evidence. The whole of

the proceedings was in English. Yet around the bars of the public section of the court crowded Muslims and Hindus from Delhi, including nearly all the male population from the Lane of the Mosque. They watched the judges' faces, and tried to catch some indication of who would win in that day's work.

It was the end of the second day's hearing, and I was motoring ho e with the Chief Justice. He was silent for a long time.

"You have seen nothing of the city," he said; "I have kept you in court listening to this interminable story. Let us go up to the Fort. From there we can see the Ganges at sunset—something worth coming to India for." He took a small blue-cloth book from among the cushions of the seat. "You know," he said, "Kipling may be wrong about many things, but he is invariably right about sunsets. Listen to this: 'Swiftly the light gathered itself together, painted for an instant the faces and the cart-wheels and the bullocks' horns as red as blood. Then the night fell, changing the touch in the air, drawing a low even haze, like a gossamer veil of blue, across the face of the country, and bringing out, keen and distinct, the smell of the wood-smoke and cattle and the good scent of wheaten cakes cooked on ashes.' That's right, every word of it. I wish he had always been as right as that. It's when he makes us 'pukka sahibs' all clever people that I disagree with him. We are not all Creighton Sahibs by any means. Why do we Anglo-Indians pretend to know anything about India at all? Our India is not the real India; it is just a small world of

gymkhanas, and clubs, and tales of shooting exploits, and innumerable 'chotapegs' and generalizations about the 'native.' We do a lot of hard work as well, but we don't know India.

"Kipling infuriates me. Why will he pretend that India is a country of romance? Of course, he lets you know the worries, the mosquitoes, the fever and the sun, but he wraps the whole picture in the colours of romance. India, of all countries, is the place where romance does not exist. There is mystery, certainly, muddle and mess and colour. If these are the ingredients of romance, then India has romance, but the main impression is of joylessness and suffering. Sun-baked roads with their long trail of bullock-carts, and the brown, withered fields. India is the joyless country of the world. She has a baffling, inscrutable weariness of spirit.

"But I might be making a speech, and I told you when you came that I would not talk. Here we are at the Fort, at any rate, and we shall be able to see the Ganges before the sun goes down."

We stood in silence for some minutes watching the flat, wide yellow waters of "Mother Gunga," and the evening mists gathering in on the plains beyond. I wondered if the Heartless Mother of all Hindus was caring whether Lal Hahbib was ever to bathe himself in her waters again or whether he was to be hanged in a Government prison. As we walked back into the car, I turned to the judge again and said:

"And how, if I may ask, do you come to have *Kim* with you in the Courts?"

"It is because Kipling is so often right. I've

grumbled at him to-night, but that's only because this Lal Hahbib case has bothered me. We shall have to re-write a judgment on the whole case, Perkins and I. More lives than that of Lal Hahbib depend on the issue. I had hoped for a little mugger-shooting expedition this week-end, but instead of that I shall have to re-explore this interminable story. I was saying that Kipling is so often right. Do you remember the story in *Kim* of the Mahratta who had many enemies, and how they tried to do away with him? They hunted him, you remember, like a wet jackal, and in one city they brought a charge against him for the murder of a boy. They had the corpse ready and the witnesses. It is all so confusing to a Western mind. If Lal Hahbib had a gun, and no one else had a gun, and if a number of people were shot near the water-fount, then surely Lal Hahbib shot them. So a Western mind would argue; but in all probability the Western mind would be wrong. Wounded men were certainly found by the police, near the water-fount, but it came out in the evidence that they were found some time after the shooting. You heard that there were riots in other parts of Delhi that day. What was to prevent Muslims who had a grudge against Lal Hahbib bearing their relations who had been shot in other parts of the city to this spot, so that their wounds might speak in evidence against him? This explains one of the difficulties of justice in India: corpses can be obtained without too much difficulty.

"It is all very well to talk about India and what is to happen to her; but can you find some system

of justice which will discover the truth about the Lal Hahbibs of India and what really happens when they fire their guns? We shall explore every detail of this case, but there will still be something that we do not know. And it is not only difficulties of fact: there is the question of *personnel*. Did you notice the Crown Counsel to-day?"

Yes; I had noticed him, a small, inadequate little man, who had given as hopelessly stuttering and confused a description of his case as could be imagined.

"That man is a Muslim. He is a part of Indianization. His position was won for him purely by the influence of other Muslims. Whenever he pleads it means that the English judge has in reality to make himself responsible for the prosecution case. What would have happened to-day if the Judges of Appeal had also been Indianized? Say that two Muslim judges had sat on that appeal. Would they have dared to have given a verdict for Lal Hahbib—a Hindu—even if he had an obvious case? Or, on the other hand, would two Hindus have dared to put Lal Hahbib to death even if he had killed a whole host of Muslims? I am not against self-government in India. While I was in England I was a Radical; but let would-be reformers settle for me the case of Lal Hahbib, and I will listen to them on more general issues.

"Here we are home again, and here is tea, and so let us talk about Lal Hahbib no more. Geraldus Cambrensis once said that when you heard that the Irish Question had been solved you might know that you were on the eve of the Day of Judgment. Some-

times I think that the same is true of India. One gets a distorted notion of this country in looking exclusively at its politics. The real problem is how to feed and clothe 300,000,000 people, and the obstacle to that is the corruption which every one in this country seems to share. The whole country is corrupt, from *babus* and policemen to judges. No man will help his neighbour because each man is helping himself. But let's bury India and Lal Hahbib. . . . Do you know Sussex ? "

ENCOUNTER XIII

WITH THE MAN IN THE DELHI CLUB

IT was Saturday night in the Delhi Club after the semi-finals of the tennis tournament. In the centre of the room " white " Delhi was fox-trotting, and around at little tables the rest of us took tea or " chota-pegs " and watched.

" It looks gay," I said to my host.

Anglo-Indian women remain beautiful despite all the vagaries of a tropical climate, while the *Tatler* and *Vogue* and frequent visits home keep their generously stocked pockets well in touch with current fashions. When such women dance with the slim, erect Anglo-Indian men, with their clean semi-military grooming, the sight is inevitably a pleasant one.

" Gay. Yes, it's gay," he said, " but ever so deceptive. You see Gray over there, dancing with Miss Millais ? His wife went home just two years ago now to have a kid, and the doctor spotted T.B. She can never come out again. That's Mrs. Tanner dancing with young Hillyard. Her husband's in the police. She was just telling me that their leave got messed up somehow, and she's not seen her children for five years. One girl was six when she saw her last. Now she is twelve, and the mother has abso-

lutely lost contact with her. Hayward, over there with the secretary lady from Viceregal Lodge, lost his wife just six months after she got here. She insisted on staying in the Plains, and it killed her."

We watched the dancing for a few moments in silence. The band ceased, but the seemingly happy, and certainly excited, crowd clapped them into starting again.

"But," said my host, "you are not here to watch dancing, but to go Pageting." (Every Anglo-Indian has read that poem of Kipling's.) "Now there is McElroy sitting all alone over there watching his young wife dance. He has been in this country for thirty years, and most of it was spent making roads down in Southern India: he saw the real country in those days. He's a member of the Legislative Assembly now, so he has seen the political end as well. He's rather a bear, and probably he'll curse you once he finds out that you are a fair-weather visitor; but if you will take the risk and can get him talking, you will find that he knows a good deal about the country."

We crossed to where McElroy was sitting. He was an enormously tall man, thin and pale and with sunken cheeks. At first one might have thought that he was ill and weak, but every movement gave the suggestion of power and of reserve energy. He frowned around the room on the dancers as if the whole of this social routine bored him. Yes, certainly he looked a bear. Yet instead of dealing in abuse he received me kindly, ordered two "chota-pegs," and began to talk.

"I suppose you are new to the Wog," he began.

"I don't even know what you mean by a Wog," I replied. "It sounds rather like a brand of floor polish."

"It's the beginning and end of wisdom to know the Wog—that's just short for the Wily Oriental Gentleman. Don't generalize about India, but keep your eye on the Wog. The Oriental gentleman is as plausible as an innocent child, and yet his very tissue is corruption. Let all your idealistic gentlemen come out here and try to govern in face of the Oriental gentleman and his corruption. The Indian has no idea of honesty: the judges take bribes; the police do the same. A policeman would not bring a stretcher to a hurt man in the streets of Delhi without a bribe of a rupee or two. A *babu* will not sell stamps or postal orders to a Hindu without the commission of a few annas. Every section of the Government service which is controlled by Indians is riddled by the same vice."

"One hears stories," I said, "of the loyalty and honesty of Indian bearers to their white masters. How do you account for that if they are so thoroughly corrupt?"

"There we come near to the truth and the cause of all the trouble out here. The one thing that an Indian can understand is the conception of personal loyalty: he has been used to serving a chief or the head of his family. As long as we ruled India by a small group of gentlemen the Indian would obey them and honour them. But in England we learnt all this twaddle about self-determination long before

President Wilson had heard of it. We tried to introduce abstract democratic institutions into a country which by its very tradition can only understand personal aristocratic institutions. Instead of a few gentlemen of family ruling by personal allegiance, we introduced a mob of half-baked young gentlemen, very good at passing examinations, but knowing less about life than a London 'bus-driver. How can you expect democratic institutions to be accepted and understood in a country with a caste system which insists that blood and birth are the only things in life worth having? Or how can you expect a people with those traditions to accept ill-bred young puppets who would count for nothing socially in Putney, but lord it here as if they were Pashas? The old I.C.S. was a fine service: men came out here, made their homes, and got to know the people. They rode on horseback in a leisurely way through their districts until every one knew them, by sight at least. To-day England has come closer to India, and the official has gone farther away. He has always one eye on the P. & O. sailing list and the prospect of frequent leave in the old country. His leisurely horseback inspections have gone; he now dashes through his districts in a closed car. No one knows him from Adam. All hope of personal contact, the only thing which will ever count with an Indian, has disappeared. It may be sad to demagogues, but this is the essential difference: we in the West are faithful to institutions, while the Easterner is faithful to himself and his family and his personal leader. You will find in that the reason for much of the poverty of this

country. A peasant will prefer to work for himself and his family, and cheat his neighbour, than join in some general irrigation scheme and increase the wealth of the whole district. Even their political intrigues fail because they cannot be faithful to a general plan of campaign."

"I hear quite often," I said, "that we could have done more in this country if the officials had made a more sympathetic study of the literature and the language."

"I am not going to admit that right away. The bottom trouble is that we have tried to govern a country by institutions and a machine when it should have been led by men. Your suggestion is another matter, and really brings us up against the problem of education in this country. The conditions here are more or less the same as in Egypt; in both countries the bulk of the population is a peasantry, a totally illiterate peasantry. We have never tackled the real problem of educating them. Whenever we have made any educational penetration among the peasantry it has been to convert sons of peasant cultivators into *babus*. As long as there was a demand for an underpaid semi-professionalism of this kind all went well. To-day Government offices are swollen with unwanted clerks, and there are still more totally unemployed. Our main educational activity has been to give a higher education on Western lines to a small number. We give them an emasculated form of literary education, wholly unsuited to their interests and environment. They become, like Hurree Babu in *Kim*, M.A.'s of Calcutta

University ' by means of due attention to Latin and Wordsworth's *Excursion*.' Unfortunately, there is one quality they do not share with Hurree Babu, and that is honesty."

" Would you stop educating the people out here, then ? " I asked.

" Hallo," he said, " the dance is over," and we both rose to greet young Mrs. McElroy and her partner as they walked over towards us. A moment later we were joined by Mrs. Tanner—whose husband was in the police—and Gray, whose wife had gone home with T.B.

" What's it to be this time ? " said McElroy.

" Gin Fizz for me," said Mrs. McElroy.

" Shall we make it a Gin Fizz all round ? " No one dissented, so a Gin Fizz all round it was.

" I see Hawarden's back," said Gray.

" Yes, he's come to pick up a few contracts for steel rails," answered McElroy.

" He's flourishing. What does he get a month ? " broke in Mrs. Tanner.

No one seemed to know, but they disputed it : at any rate it could not be less than fifteen hundred rupees.

" I hear they have some new horses at Viceregal Lodge," said Gray.

" They wanted them," said Mrs. Tanner. " The new military A.D.C. up there's a nice boy—Gerald, I think they call him. It's funny to have a surname ' Gerald.' Does any one know him ? "

No one did. There was silence again.

" Who'll get the tennis championship this season ? "

asked Mrs. McElroy. She looked a bored young woman as she sat sipping her Gin Fizz: she spoke as if it were only that she must say something if nobody else would. Gray was about to reply when the band struck up again.

"Shall we leave the tennis tournament to settle itself?" said Gray. "Mrs. McElroy, may I have the pleasure?"

"You're not tired, dear?" asked McElroy. His wife murmured a negative. Mrs. McElroy's partner joined with Mrs. Tanner, and soon the whole room was gyrating again.

"You were talking about education," said McElroy.

I was so surprised at the suddenness with which he had been able to dissociate himself from all the babble of the last few minutes that I could not avoid asking him:

"Why is it that when Anglo-Indians come together they just talk of polo and tennis and monthly salaries, and yet when you get them individually they will talk quite seriously about India?" I should have remembered my host's remark that McElroy could be a bear. He replied in a crushing Johnsonian manner:

"It's because Anglo-Indians, when they come together, come for the sake of rest, and they talk gossip like other people all over the world in similar circumstances. We are prepared to discuss India when it is necessary, but we like amusement, just as other folk do. Of course we are too near the problem to be able to do much with it: there's no one in India whose business it is to attempt to see the thing as a

whole. But to talk about education. You were asking me whether we ought to stop educating people out here.

"I think that is impossible. We have followed a progressive policy in India too long ever to go back. Personally, I think it would have been better if we had never done anything except trade with India and police her. I may be wrong. I cannot see what good all our literary Western education has done to these people. We ought never to have settled here to the extent we have done: this isn't a country in which a white man can develop any adequate sort of life.

"But we have gone too far, and we have been here too long, to consider these questions now. Mind you, we have done a big job here, a bigger one than the Romans ever did. We have given these people peace for close on a hundred years, and if we were away they would be fighting among themselves like wild-cats. If they ever become a nation it will be through us that they will have done it; and if we can only find a small number of Indians who are honest enough to run a bureaucracy without scheming for their families or their section, we may do it yet. . . . Hallo, this must be the last dance. We must meet again and talk more of these things."

But somehow we never did.

ENCOUNTER XIV

WITH THE WOMAN I DID NOT MEET

SHE was a large woman, with masses of streaky black hair, and enormous sun-glasses. She was going home from Calcutta, and as far as Colombo I travelled by the same boat. I never spoke to her: most of her time she sat sewing and knitting, or staring at the sea through her round yellow glasses. I noticed many women talking to her, and this is what they said afterwards one to another. I overheard it in that inevitable way in which, on a boat, one hears so much.

The Major's wife said: "Her husband's in the police, in a station near Poona. No; I don't know what she is; she hadn't much to say about her people. What would he get, did you ask, my dear? I really don't know anything about the police. I must ask my husband; I daresay he would know. I suppose it can't be more than five hundred rupees a month, and they live on it, my dear, and have children. . . . When we were up at Quetta there was a policeman's wife, who . . ."

There was a strange white-haired little woman, a missionary, who said: "This is to be her second

child : the other died just when it was born. It was at the station, and they were afraid the doctor was not very good—you see, it came earlier than they thought, and he was out on a party. All men ; you know the sort of thing. She is glad in a way that she is going home, but she misses her husband terribly. What is he ? Do you know, I forgot to ask. Somehow we started talking about children. But she said how devoted they were to one another. He got leave to come and see her off at Calcutta. I saw him there : he was such a nice man. India takes a cruel toll of women. I used to wonder, when my third boy died, whether the work out here was worth it all. My husband stuck to his mission-station, and I'm glad now that he did. I often ask God to forgive me for being weak. I know He will forgive me ; He must have known how difficult it was. It's a little bit easier for missionaries now, perhaps. We couldn't get away much to the Hills in those days. I am not sorry I did it, but I couldn't do it again."

There was the Hon. Violet A. of Simla : " Of course ; I hadn't noticed. I must speak to her. This makes us all one, you know. I haven't the least idea what to say to her, though. She'll know nobody, I suppose. What does one say to these people ? It is so difficult to imagine what their feelings are—you know, to get into their lives. I remember when the little daughter of the Governor of the United Provinces was born. I was staying in the Hills with Lady —— at Government House. Dear little thing, that daughter, Helen. I suppose she will be coming out this year. It does

seem so strange. I must, of course, see this woman. Do tell me something to say to her."

Miss A. and Miss B. passed her one day as they hurried along the deck on their way to a game of bull-board with Mr. C. and Mr. D. Miss A. and Miss B. had not met Mr. C. and Mr. D. until they all came on the same boat at Calcutta, but now . . . well now, four hearts with but a single beat. Miss A. (or was it Miss B. ?—for they looked very much alike : just slips of white silk with the wind flapping through them) turned her head as they passed the woman who sat alone sewing, and said, " Good Lord ! What a life. Poor thing."

Then there was Mrs. Y. ; her husband was in the police at Bombay. " Vailer. Yes, that's her name. She did well to get him. Her father was a sort of clerk at a tourist agency—not quite ' sahib,' you know. Why, my dear, an Eurasian had the job before he had it. It was a lift up for her, getting Vailer, though I suppose she got him because no one else wanted him. He was down in Bombay before he went up to a Station. That is when she met him first, at a dance at the Taj Mahal Hotel. He was ' fast,' young Vailer. I never heard much good of him. They say he settled down a little after he married her and went up to a Station. She's a settling sort of woman, you know. Of course there's a lot of talk about him up at the Station. She doesn't like the Club much, and he does. Why, he lives there ; and of course you won't tell anyone else, but he's been a lot with that Laiver woman for months now. Didn't you know ? Ask anyone

at the Station. That's why the poor dear is so sick at having to come home. Some say he sent her to get her out of the way. I'm sorry for her, poor thing."

An elderly woman, whose husband was an I.C.S., was talking to a young man of about twenty, her son. "I don't advise you against going into the Service, but remember what it means. It's hard in all sorts of strange ways on the woman you marry. You may think now that the Englishwoman in India has a very easy time of it, but, believe me, you are wrong. What she really has is a lazy time, and that is not good for her. I know of no place in the world where so many cultured women have nothing to do but talk scandal as in India. I remember when I was at a Station how we would seize on a piece of scandal like a starving dog at a bone. And the hours and hours I used to spend turning over the pages of a months-old *Tatler*, looking at the faces of people I didn't know.

"And then, as with this woman, there are children. I don't know why she is coming home: I suppose there must be some special reason. It's not that part that makes it so difficult; it's the bringing up of children in India. I often think that unless one is very careful a child is spoiled by the age of four in India: there are always a dozen servants at hand to pamper the silliest whim. And then there is, sooner or later, always a parting with the children or with one's husband —that is an Anglo-Indian woman's choice. It's wonderful how the world of men takes a woman's life for granted. I should like to know just what the men

on this boat think of this woman's lonely journey home."

And a stewardess said : " No, she didn't feel very well. It's much hotter now that we are getting near Madras, and of course it's the second week in March. I got her some tea : she's asleep now."

ENCOUNTER XV

WITH THE MAN IN SEARCH OF A FAITH

I SAT back in my deck-chair pleasantly tired. We had spent the day ashore at Penang, doing all that the tourist agencies expected us to do, even to presenting a dollar to the priest of the Snake Temple who disarmingly offers one a State Express cigarette at the threshold of his holy place. Three of us sat in our chairs on the deck after dinner watching the sun go down, a holocaust of a myriad colours, and the Malayan moon rising up, yellow like a lemon upon a night sky of dark velvet.

One of my companions I knew to be Frinton, a popular young preacher of whom great things were expected. The other I did not know. He had been a silent and slightly bored member of our shore party, one who had the air of having done this sort of thing before. Frinton never talked much, except in public ; the silent man had been silent all day, and I was pleasantly tired. Everything indicated an evening of quiet laziness. Then suddenly the silent man began to talk. His reticence broke just as a thunder-cloud breaks sometimes after a long drought. Talk ! It was continual. I remember fragments only, and what I record is only a fragment of what I remember.

It began with one of us—perhaps it was I—making some conventional remark about the sunset, a remark which precipitated into words the sum of the silent man's reticence.

"Why," he exclaimed suddenly, "does God grow wanton each night in the colours of the sunset and yet allow so much useless suffering in the world?"

It was sudden, and for the moment both Frinton and I were taken aback. Then Frinton said quietly;

"Are you sure that suffering is useless?"

"Yes," replied the silent man, "and that would make a good title for a sermon, 'The Utility of Pain'; but it has little meaning in life, particularly the life of these last ten years. It was all very well for Browning, back in the 'fifties, to cant away that the evil is 'null, is nought, is silence implying sound.' If all one has to do in life is to sit beneath an Italian sky and look at the Campanile, and say in the manner of the Creator that it is good, it becomes easy to spin away at a story about not fearing the fog in your throat. When did Browning really feel the fog in his throat, I wonder. It's simple enough to treat the world as a moral gymnasium as long as one does not have to strain one's own muscles." At once pathetic and aggressive, he turned to Frinton, "It's a twisted world, sir, and I should like to know what you have to offer."

"You ask for a great deal," said Frinton. "I admit that it is difficult to pass through Europe to-day and yet feel that we are getting somewhere. I only know that I wish to glory in the beauty of things like that sunset, garish though it may be, and allow

such experiences to help me to work away at eliminating the terrible, inexplicable things in life."

"It is easy enough to talk," said the strange man, "but what can you do? Life is just like a piece of machinery that has gone wrong, and humanity a soft mass entangled in the middle of it. I wonder if your religious institutions help very much. I have been going round the world looking at the holy places of different peoples. That is why the gentleman at the Snake Temple with his State Express cigarettes did not interest me: he should have been a bazaar-keeper. But I have seen Rome, and I saw Kashi, or Benares as they call it, and I am going on to see the holy places of Confucius—but it's chicanery, all of it. Take the history of the Christian Church—it seems to me one of the most melancholy histories in the story of humanity."

"I am a priest," said Frinton, "and I accept your challenge there. I believe that we are nearer to one another than you think, for I came out to try and find myself in my faith. I was once the leader of the missionary group in our sect; when I go back I shall no longer be that: I cannot do it. Perhaps they will unfrock me for it. I have come to see, not the littleness of each faith, but the greatness. Human pride and jealousy have ravaged each faith and the human desire for power has twisted every religious institution in the world; but you cannot judge from these things alone. I would ask you rather to take the central figure of each religion as a symbol of an attitude to life and make your judgment from that. Christ, Confucius, Buddha, Mahomet—would not the

world be a strange place if its people had not these symbols around which to gather their ideals. I suppose you would say that the phrase 'The Living Christ' is just an empty cliché; for me it is everything.

"The Living Christ is the symbol of what we in the West hold as good, a symbol which changes for each person and yet has enough which is common to us all to be recognizable. It grows because we add to it whatever tends in our minds towards good from generation to generation. For me that Living Christ is the greatest of all symbols, but I see now the folly of trying to substitute this symbol *en bloc* in the minds of other races whose symbols of good centre in Confucius and Buddha. You cannot substitute at the same time the tradition and the experience behind the symbol; and without that the symbol is useless. All we can do is to live out that symbol of good which is proper to our own tradition, and hope that those who live within other traditions and other systems will find something in our way to admire and to adopt. We can learn too from the other traditions; Buddhism could enrich our conception of this life in its relation to the next, and Confucius could teach us a great deal on duty within the family, a matter on which Christianity is particularly weak. Of course there is superstition within each religion: Christianity is as full of it as any other faith. In the holy places, as you call them, you see the superstition within the faith in its most blatant form. We both have seen the Ganges —Mother Gunga—and the pilgrims who bathe in those waters. You would call them all superstitious,

and most of them are. But some find the bathing a help to keep before their minds the symbol of what is for them All Good. Is that wrong, and does it differ from the ritual of the Christian Church ? The keenest mind is beyond the need of ritual, it dwells with its symbol; but should some find the ritual a help, I would welcome them to use it, whatever it may be."

The strange man stared for some moments at the flat moonlit water, and then said:

" Padre ! I am nearer you than I ever expected to be; but then you are not what you seem to be. You have simplified everything, and of course all simplifying leads to falsification. Each of the faiths you have mentioned, and of course you only mention the four most reputable, is not only a faith but a vested interest. The Americans realize like: they have organized the sale of Christianity throughout the East just as if it were the sale of sewing-machines. Rome would like to spread a dry rot through every other sect and faith to increase the power and prestige of her own religion. There is no oil syndicate as well or as unscrupulously organized as some of our religions. You talk of Buddhism, and I grant you that in the realm of the intellect and of the spirit Buddhism is a fine thing; but have you ever been in the temples among the worshippers and seen what a tawdry business the modern Buddhist institution of religion has become ? I remember visiting in Ceylon, at Kandy, one of the holy places of Buddhism, the Temple of the Tooth, a neat enough little temple, built solidly and squarely in timber and stone. But the worship ! Over the altar was a cardboard lamp-shade coloured

in red, white and blue, with an inscription in English, 'From the Servants of the Queen's Hotel.' Across the temple were strings of little paper flags, some of them flapping over the figure of Buddha, who sat in placid contemplation in the middle of it all. I thought at first that the temple had been dressed up for some children's party. It's the same with all religions all over the world. They are mockeries of their founders, and they merely serve to increase the powers of their priesthoods. And what is the result? I can tell you the result in Europe, at any rate. Men of good will, as you would call them, have shut themselves up outside these religious machines. They have written 'Ichabod' on the doors of the institutions of faith. They have no temple and no institutions! But they have a faith. They worship a God whose attributes they do not understand. In moments they see the glory of life, and for ever they know that they do not understand. Yes, I know you'll say that contradicts what I said about the sunset at first, but I only did that to draw you. These others I speak of, they live knowing that the meaning of all life is metaphysical; it is all beyond words, nearly beyond thought. We only know that we are in the Godhead and that the Godhead is with us."

"You are a layman," said Frinton; "you work out a faith for yourself. I am a priest; I have to work out a faith which I can communicate to others. You say that you have no temple, no institutions. Should you not worship in every temple, in every institution? The spiritual life of isolation in the loneliness of the intellect is a spiritual egoism. The

pace of humanity, as the Book of Platitudes—the wisest book in the world—has told us, is the pace of its slowest members. You may think you can go quickly, or one nation may think it can go quickly, but it is sure sooner or later to be tripped. Disease, war, pestilence and superstition, that is the tripping up which the slower members in life and the slower nations are for ever giving to us that run ahead."

"I don't mind your verses from your Book of Platitudes," said the strange man, "but I object to your exegesis of them. You don't show me how these religions combined help the weakest members. All religions are trying to take men's minds into other worlds: I want to keep the nose of humanity rubbing on the earth at the problems which surround it. The only hope for humanity is to drop 'the vale of tears' view of the world, and see that it must find its paradise in time, not in eternity. Look at all the loss of human energy which the monastic systems of the various faiths have brought into the world: all that force might have been spent in building drains and saving human lives."

"But," said Frinton, "have you not come to the great difference between Christianity and the faiths of the East? Our faith, as I see it, works itself out in this life. I am not a salvationist, hoping that each man will spend his life putting just a little polish on his own individual soul. I am prepared to bury the crucifix if you will give me the Living Christ I spoke of a little while ago. Christianity is the religion of the practical West, of materialism if you like, while the religions of the East dwell much more in some

other world. Buddhism and Hinduism have much more definite ideas of the other world than Christianity; but then Christianity has very definite ideas of the life of this world, charity, sympathy, and honesty."

They were both silent for some time; and then Frinton turned to me and said:

"You have said nothing; what do you think about these things?"

I had listened with interest at first to all that the strange man had said, and admired the gentle way in which Frinton had drawn him into more reasoned argument. It is true that I wondered why they had felt it necessary to talk on this night at all. With that moonlight on the inky seas, the twinkling lights of an occasional ship, homeward bound for England, and the summer lightning flashing out the contour of the coast across the strait, these had been enough to dream about without talking at all. It was towards the end that something happened. Frinton's last argument had followed the very lines of a talk I had once had with a priest in the Mediterranean, and I suddenly remembered how ill I had been and how mercilessly that little Italian packet-boat had lurched, and rolled, and lurched again.

"I'm going to bed," I said, and with that I left them to dispute the sum of things between themselves.

ENCOUNTER XVI

WITH SINGAPORE: DAYS AND NIGHTS

I

THE approach to other ports is more beautiful, but nowhere does water life show such a gaudy variety of colour and form as at Singapore. Out in the deep sea beyond the breakwater are the slim dim-grey shapes of battleships, and plying around them, as if in playful impertinence, bob Chinese sampans with women rowers and a cargo of men and children eating rice. Fishing craft, too, twakows, with their dark Tamil crews, and slim rowing boats crowded with Malayan oarsmen, and Japanese motor-boats darting in and out to bring the fish to shore; for in Singapore the Japanese control the sale of fish, though others may search for it on the seas. At anchor, at the wharves, are the great passenger boats, the snobs of the port, ugly and mighty. How a big ocean steamer can gaze down with superiority on a junk is the greatest enigma in maritime manners, for a junk is the beauty of the sea. She comes down to Singapore right from China in the fair-weather monsoon, her large brown sail enormous and graceful, and in her shape all the cunning which the experience of sailors of three thousand years can devise. Beautiful lady, she holds her secret

too; for somewhere in her cargo of white rice (a treat of home-grown Chinese rice) is hidden opium and morphia for the comfort of Singapore Chinese.

Chinese, Tamils, Japanese, Malays, Americans, British and over sixty other nationalities somewhere in that city seek their fortunes. No one can envy those who maintain peace and justice in the crown colony of Singapore.

II

A Chinese woman in a Taoist temple. Her mother and father died of plague at a village one hundred miles north of Canton, and an uncle had promised to take her to the rich city of the "red-headed devils," where all could obtain rice and dollars. Two days ago she had arrived on a junk, and a "foreign devil" in strange clothes had bared her left arm and scratched it three times and rubbed into the wounds some white magical liquid. She did not understand what it was, though some said that in this way the red devils made an offering to the Goddess of Diseases. To-day, she came, for the first time, to a temple of her people. Two things worried her: the scratches on her arm had grown into scars, and she was not sure that the gods approved of her journey. To appease them she stood before the altar, and after clapping her hands to make sure that the gods were listening, she prayed. This done, she took from the altar a divining-box full of sandalwood sticks. Again she prayed, and then shook the box until one stick fell out. This she picked up and looked dumbly at its inscription, but failing to read its characters she took it to a priest

in a little office by the altar. Yes, for twenty-five cents he could read it. What did she want to know? Whether she should stay in Singapore? He put on his spectacles, counted her money carefully into a till, and then examined the divining-stick.

Certainly she might stay, but she must come often to the temple, do auguries with the kidney blocks, and pay her dues.

She went out, happy, to the streets, where more carts moved without horses than she had ever seen before. Ten minutes later she was drinking coffee and smoking a cigarette in a missionary shelter, glad that her gods were happy.

III

Nothing in the world is more consistently treacherous than the illusions we gain from romantic fiction. Our ideas of opium dens seem to emerge from those suburban villas where romantic writers retail to the bourgeois the sin which he dare not commit.

Opium dens! How redolent of vice they seem. . . . Soft silk-covered divans, down cushions of luxurious depth, dim orange lights, Chinese men and Western women, the latter always in evening dress, sleeping in ecstasy or writhing in the after-effects of the drug.

Nearly every street in Chinatown has its opium den. You push through the shuttered door, and as long as you can speak Chinese you will be welcome, whether you are Chinese or " red-head " and whether you come to smoke or not. The proprietor will show you his most valuable pipes, long tubes encrusted on the inside with the residue of years of smoking and

sweetened with age. You may pass freely inside to the dens and watch the smokers. A long bench, wide enough for a man to stretch himself upon it at full length, encircles the entire room. On this hard bed the Chinese opium-smoker sleeps, and for a pillow he has a slab of blue porcelain. Soft beds and flabby pillows! How the Chinese despise us effete Westerners.

Within the den an atmosphere of normality dwells. Men are chattering to each other before and after smoking; for this is the Coolies' Club. No one seems in a hurry to begin to smoke. Sometimes a man will take off his jacket, lie down, and smoke a pipe of ordinary tobacco for half an hour before he begins to apply himself to the drug. When he decides at last that the dream-hour has come, he tears open the little twenty-cent packet stamped "Government Monopolies" and extracts the inner paper with its daub of opium, looking every bit like a smudge of brown treacle. The paper and the daub are screwed together in the end of the pipe and heated with a red-hot wire. At last, when the heat is sufficient, the sickly fumes begin to arise. The smoker inhales and swallows. Slowly a dull yellow gloom spreads over the whole face, until at last the countenance is entirely expressionless. Behind this blank exterior burns the multicoloured tissue of dream.

The coolie in an opium den is quite talkative, though seldom truthful. He will tell a missionary that smoking is wrong, that he knows it to be wrong, but that he cannot stop himself. "If only the Government would stop this terrible drug," he says with the most serious expression. To the more blasé resident

he will boast that he has smoked for thirty years, and that he is none the worse for it. Sometimes he will reveal without the least concern the economic results which accompany the smoking. "My wife," he will say, "and two children still live in Canton. I came here to get money for them as rickshaw puller. I earn at first one dollar thirty cents. I send home sixty cents. Now I smoke. I spend eighty cents every day in the house of dreams. I only earn one dollar now. How can I send money? I never hear from my wife. My wife never hears from me. . . ."

IV

A Chinese shop in Chinatown with two counters facing each other. Behind one counter sat an old Chinese, the father of the family, clothed in a flowing silken tunic and a skull cap of silk; his pigtail, defiant of progress, remained uncut, while his moustaches hung down from each side of his mouth like long threads of silk. Around him lay his store of funeral necessities: paper shoes for the dead, pasteboard dragons for processions, images in red and blue and yellow, sham money notes, and gaudy paper lanterns. Mysterious, inscrutable, he looked out from amid his gay, grotesque wares, without ever a movement or change of expression.

At the other counter stood the son of the old man, in a loud Western lounge suit with padded shoulders and brown brogues. His hair was close-cropped and greased; gold stoppings were daubed recklessly over his teeth, and he spoke American with a thick guttural accent. Around him were Osram lamps, electrical

plugs, electric irons, electric toasting trays, and unending coils of electric wire.

We asked him what he thought of his father's side of the shop. "It sells," he replied, and grinned from ear to ear.

And between father and son lay one generation of education in the mission schools.

V

Ten o'clock at night at the European Club. A tobacco agent, a rubber man, and a member of an American steamship company are discussing their fourth "chota-peg." "Whisky here has been bad for six weeks," says the tobacco man after a pause. "I must see the secretary about it."

Silence while all drink.

"I see that Inrod has packed up after the tanning boom," says the rubber man.

"Good fellow, Inrod," says the steamship man.

Silence again.

"How is baccy selling?" adds the steamship man, after another draw at his whisky.

The tobacco-man, who has been silent, becomes voluble. "We are really going ahead. You know our old slogan in our Chink sales: 'A cigarette in the mouth of every man, woman and child.' It's working splendidly, especially with the children."

"Don't the missionaries trouble you?" asks the steamship man.

"They're always interfering, of course, but they like playing with opium: it's more lurid. Our main trouble is that the company, in its infinite folly, is

beginning to think that the Chinks can sell the stuff better than we can. They are beginning to replace some of us with the miserable fellows you take over to America and educate in your Universities."

"Oh! I'm through with that thin education stuff," replies the steamship man. "You will never do anything with the Chink. You know my boy Herbert. He was out here lazing it for a few months last year. Lucy writes that now he actually wants to become a missionary and learn the Chink lingo. That's what Princeton is doing for him."

"Good lord!" says the rubber man. "You can't teach the Chink anything. Just animals. Rickshaw pullers. Hewers of wood and drawers of water. Let's have another drink." He claps his hands, and noiselessly the boy puts the fifth round of "chota-pegs" before them.

"Well! Here's luck," he adds.

Silence while they all drink.

"By the way," says the tobacco man, "rubber seems to be picking up. Seen anything of Irdon the planter? He had a peach of a Malay girl last fall when I was up on that estate."

"Still got her," says the rubber man with the last gulp of his drink. "Sorry, you fellows, I must be getting along."

"And me," adds the steamship agent.

"Wives, I suppose," says the tobacco man. "Well, you must pay the price. 'Night."

"Good night!"

"Good night!"

VI

Singapore is a tiny blot of land at the end of the great land mass of Asia. It is as if one had made an enormous spill of ink, and at the end of it the pen had spluttered. The tiny blot, says the naval stragetist, is important in its position, and in the Straits of Johore where Singapore joins the mainland he would build a naval base.

To find the site you leave the city and the harbour behind you, cross the island through rubber estates, pineapple farms, and palm groves, until you enter a piece of virgin jungle. At the end of this you can see the Straits, with the mainland of Johore, low-lying, with its mangrove swamps and rubber trees, on the opposite side. Human life shows itself there to-day in a few Malay canoes with their half-naked crews.

One turns back to the jungle again, where life is so prolific, so thick, so disordered, so wasteful, where luxuriant growth chokes luxuriant growth and life struggles with life. One begins to think of human life under the symbol of the jungle, but the site of a naval base is so suggestive a place for moralizing that one had better cease and go elsewhere.

VII

There is a café in Singapore within a stone's throw of the wharves where Orientals may enter freely and which, at the same time, is not too dirty for Westerners to frequent with moderate comfort.

There one day went a Scotch merchant reared in the stubborn Puritanism of six generations, a Chinese secretary to a millionaire merchant who divided his

energies between fan-tan and opium, and a Hindu teacher in a Government school for Tamils. They were all old residents in the city and had long been friends. Over innumerable cups of black coffee they had discussed Singapore, the place where men from the races of each one of them could meet.

"You see," said the Scotchman, "a European can't live a decent life here. For three months of the year his wife has to go to Australia or somewhere because of the climate, and when the bairns come she leaves him for years to educate them in Europe. What can you expect a man to do?"

"My people," said the Indian, "know that they will never see Mother Gunga again. They forget the quiet and the contemplation which under our Indian sun they achieve. They go the way of wantonness."

The Chinese was silent for some time. "My men can live here, but they do not bring their wives and families. They leave them behind. It is a city of evil, but five years hence we shall all be here still. Perhaps," he added without any change of expression, "we shall be saying just the same things."

VIII

Yet there is a quiet life in Singapore, ordered and striving, where men try harder than perhaps anywhere else in the world to fashion into human life what they believe to be the Will of God. It is all very difficult, of course, in a climate where the weather is never cold and the sun is often just a little too hot. One is apt to grow benignant and placid, and to acquiesce in the conditions of things as they are. Yet some of

the residents in Singapore refuse to be "malayanized."

It is these few who see the difficulty of throwing together innumerable races to live in one island. They see that traditions negative one another, that the loose, flotsam elements are thrown to the surface, and that it is hard for the good to prevail.

I remember standing one night on the roof of a mission hall in Singapore, where Chinese boys, dressed like Europeans, were singing the English National Anthem in English. The man who led them was among the most disinterested I know, and he was often troubled at the muddled incoherence of cultures which must be moving in the minds of those Chinese boys.

I remember, too, standing one night for the last hymn of evensong in the congregation of one of the free churches of Singapore. The preacher had spoken of Bolshevism, and in the midst of his sermon we had been reminded how many forms Bolshevism may take by a civet-cat loosening a brick in the roof so that it fell into the aisle below. Unpleasant creatures, civet-cats, as we felt for the rest of the evening; selfish revolutionary animals.

And then the congregation rose to sing. The white ducks of the men gave them a certain uniformity, but with the women one saw at once the racial variety of those who were gathered in that congregation: pale, natty Chinese; dull-eyed, pleasant-faced Malays; black, fierce Tamils; and a nondescript crowd of Europeans. They sang "Lead, kindly light," and I realized the urgency of Newman's prayer as I had never realized it before as those men and women of many races rose up in that chapel on the island to sing of their faith.

ENCOUNTER XVII

WITH A FILM CENSOR

HE was the censor of cinema films in a British Crown Colony out East. Before I met him I did not know that such people existed: once I had seen his work, I realized how vitally important his service was.

Every day and all day he sat in his private projection room and watched the motion pictures which renters wished to display within the territory. By his side was an electric bell, and this he would press as soon as he saw anything on the screen to which he objected. As soon as the operator heard that bell he would stop the machine, slip a piece of paper in the spool, and then start displaying again. Sometimes the bell would ring six or seven times during a single piece. I found it very difficult at first to cease from being a film-fan and to view it all from a censor's point of view. Just as I was becoming keenly interested in a picture the bell would give its provoking tinkle, and the picture would jerk to a sudden stop. Later the operator would make " clippings " of all the passages which were judged objectionable, and the revised film would be patched together and sent out to the renters for display.

"You find a good deal you have to censor," I remarked.

"I find that on an average twelve per cent. of the films which come through this office have to be barred altogether, while well over ninety per cent. have to be clipped in one way or another. Let me show you a few films on which I have worked; it will save explanation."

And within his projecting room he showed me a selection of extracts from the films which were passing through his office, news-reels, vaudeville show, night-club scenes, and political riots, one following the other with "admirable confusion" until they mingled before one's eyes in a nightmare stream.

"Look at this first film," he said. "It's a scene in a night café. I suppose it would be harmless in New York or London—numbers of scantily dressed girls dancing with these men who are not exactly sober. What is the effect of a film like that out East? Orientals have always believed that we Westerners respect our women folk and are able to protect them. However much the Oriental may despise us, and of course every Oriental despises every Occidental, they do honour us for that. Imagine what effect this film would have on such conceptions. Remember, too, that the Oriental is extremely modest where women are concerned. In the West we mistake morality and modesty. The Oriental may be a wanderer in his *amours*, but he insists that his own wife or wives shall be kept covered up out of public view. Such a discretion is the duty of every decent man. Every Western woman he sees on the screen is immodest

to him. Remember, too, that the Oriental takes his moving picture with a seriousness equal to his treatment of life itself. The results are just terrifying. You ought to see an Indian or Chinese audience react to a bedroom scene. Have you had enough of that one ? " He touched his bell ; the picture switched off suddenly and another one came on.

" Here is a second film which I think even more dangerous. In fact, I can't understand how decent producers can ever send this sort of thing East. The plot is based on one of those ultra-romantic novelettes in which a white woman falls in love with a coloured man. He happens to be an Indian in this film, but usually he is an Arab : the effect is all the same. Here's the extract I want to show you : the Indian making love to the Western woman. Of course a film like that would never be licensed in India ; but can you imagine what its effect will be all over the Far East ? In China there is no effective censorship, except in a few of the Treaty Ports. The renters can take that film anywhere they like to the interior. How the Chinese will enjoy seeing that ' red-headed devil ' subdued by a coloured man.

" Here's another film, and one to which I can't find any grounds for objection, and yet I'm quite sure that its general effect will be harmful. It gives a supposed picture of fashionable life in Europe. The whole impression is one of luxury and waste and idleness. It's not a true picture, perhaps, and these luxurious houses may be cardboard properties for all I know, but it looks very real. Perhaps half a million peasants living on the poverty line will see that film in one part

of Asia or another. They may not be very intelligent, but it will make them talk and think.

"Here is something which looks fairly harmless," he said as another film came on. "This is an American film, and you see a group of wealthy Americans gambling around a *roulette* table. Imagine what will happen when this film circulates in China. Many Chinese believe that America is a great country, and that what Americans do they should imitate. Apart from that, the Chinese are great gamblers. I wonder how many of them will imagine from that film that all the best Western people gamble.

"I have quite a different group of films here," he went on. "I'll show you an extract only. Here is another film based on the pseudo-romantic novel. A group of European travellers, you see, are attacked by Arabs in the desert. The most charming young woman in the party is captured and taken to the Arab camp. Here comes Captain Gay, though, her lover, with a troop of cavalry. A well-staged tussle between his group and the Arabs. . . . Later they will rescue the young lady, of course; but at the moment I am not worrying about her. That fight between Muslims and Europeans is likely to cause trouble if the film is exhibited anywhere in the world of Islam."

He showed me other films, but these I have mentioned are typical, and his last remark was to reiterate something he had already said:

"How can people send out films of this sort, which will debase their own civilization and create friction and race hatred? I wonder sometimes why the United States—the greatest exporter of films in the

world—does not exercise some special censorship on these films which come to the Orient. It would lessen race hatred out here, and it would certainly add to the prestige of Western nations."

I thought much of what that film censor had said, and I found that on all sides responsible people agreed with him.

An ex-Commissioner of Police for Bengal said to me : " The Indian a generation ago knew very little of the intimacies of European life. We kept our domestic life out of his sight, and he respected us, for he knew nothing beyond the fact that we could protect our womenfolk. The moving picture has given him a false familiarity with Western life, and this has been the forerunner of contempt. Wherever the film of Western life goes in the Orient it carries corruption. If Western prestige as a whole declines in the Orient, I would be prepared to ascribe it largly to the influence of the kinema."

It is not only Western officials who judge unfavourably of the effects of the film in the East. Here is an extract from a letter on the same theme by an educated Chinese. Nearly all the Western films in China are imported from the United States, and that is why the writer condemns especially the American film.

" I think," he writes, " that I can say a great deal unfavourably about the films of American production shown in China. Most of the pictures give an unfavourable impression of American daily life: for instance, the numerous reels of long detective and

mystery stories, cheap love affairs, dress for the sake of extreme undress, craze for the almighty dollar."

I seem to hear the voice of tolerance protesting that if the West can have its myriad film displays why should not the Orient have them as well. Possibly the West has little to offer the East that is good; but we should at least protect the East from those elements in our civilization which may work positive harm.

The film is an institution more widely diffused throughout the Orient than any missionary institution: it goes to spots where other features of Western life have not penetrated. I remember passing one day into a village in China which I fondly imagined to be off the beaten track; for the moment I had the thrill of the real traveller. Here at last, I thought, is a China uncontaminated by foreign influences, for nowhere was there a notice or an advertisement in Western design or printed in Western characters. It was at that moment that I turned a corner: there in front of me was a display-bill embroidered with Chinese characters, and in the middle a little figure with curly hair, a bowler hat, a cane, and big boots. It was Charlie Chaplin in the vanguard of civilization, carrying all alone into these Chinese recesses the torch of Western culture.

Hollywood, I found later, has not thought out this question of its influence on the Orient, nor, indeed, of its effect on the world at large: never does that city pause to consider the larger results of its prolific and disordered output. The only man in Hollywood who gave me a considered statement on the matter was

Mr. Raymond L. Schroch, the general manager of the Universal Pictures Corporation. " Our pictures," he wrote to me, " go to every part of the world. While we may not agree with the principle of censorship, we recognize the rights of other countries to safeguard their morals as they deem wisest. Laws and social ethics shift with race and change with environment. We realize that certain pictures may win favour in the West and yet be unsuitable for the East. We strive not to offend race, religion, or political belief." Mr. Schroch even went as far as to hope that the film might be an instrument on international comity and " bring the people of the whole world into closer sympathy and brotherly love."

There is a spirit of goodwill behind that opinion which is hopeful. If once the United States would act to prevent undesirable films finding their way out to the Orient, I feel sure that all reputable companies would support her. At the moment there are, unfortunately, many disreputable people at work in the Far-Eastern film trade. A mental drug, more widespread than that dangerous traffic in opium which the United States has been the first to condemn, is leaving America's shores every year, and is spreading its slow poison throughout the Orient.

ENCOUNTER XVIII

WITH TWO CHINESE STUDENTS

HE was an unusual official; that I had gathered from the first moment, and I have often regretted that it was only a single day I spent with him. I had met him, late one night, in the Hong Kong Club, where he had listened to other men telling me what England should do about China. It was past midnight when our party broke up, and I was about to ask the waiter to try and find me a rickshaw. It was then that this man, the unusual official, came up to me and said:

"Would you like to see the real China?"

Vague visions of spending the night parading through opium dens formed themselves in my mind, and it was with some hesitation that I said "Yes."

"Come out and spend the night with me," he said, "and to-morrow we can go and see together. It's a long way out, on the Kowloon side. I live beyond the leased territory, but if you can stand it the ride is not unpleasant at night."

We crossed by the ferry to the Kowloon side, and there a grey limousine with a Chinese chauffeur was waiting for him. Hong Kong and the Peak, which seemed hung with a thousand fairy lights, were soon

far behind. We were passing through flat rice-fields, dotted here and there with black Chinese villages. It was then that he began to speak. I cannot forgive myself, but I was far too sleepy to listen consistently. The fresh night air, coming at the end of a long day in Hong Kong, took possession of me and, struggle though I did, I found myself dozing again and again in the middle of his talk. The memory of what he said seemed to me then the acute thinking of a fresh mind which understood China, but I cannot piece his argument into coherency. It came over to me in catches of talk between slumber, and I must give it as I heard it.

"We were wrong to settle here at all. We could trade, of course, but not settle. That was what the Chinese themselves wanted, and we could have arranged it. We might have been the friends of China to-day if we had done that. . . . They think as we do; they look Oriental, but their minds function just as ours. . . . As it is, we poked in and thought we would run the country, and the Americans really poked in more than we did. . . . We just spoilt their old system and gave them nothing instead of it. . . . They have lost their old loyalties and have found no new ones. Confucius understood just as Christ understood. Unimaginative people, the Chinese, but rational; so Confucius gave them an ethic and not too much theology. He told them to bury the dead and honour them, but not to worry where they went to: not too much future world. He saw that you could only get at the Chinese through the idea of duty to the family. We have tried to

knock Confucius on the head. . . . They don't understand all this big brother republicanism and loyalty to the State. . . . China without Confucius is a country without its *raison d'être*. . . . We expect them to like us, but we don't like them, and even if we do we prey upon them. . . ."

The car jerked to a stop outside a large European bungalow, and I awoke.

"Here we are," he said; "I'm glad you were able to sleep through my sermon. To-morrow we can go and see."

I do not know what I expected him to show me, and he did not say. We drove for miles inland from the house, and then, leaving the car by the roadside, splashed our way through rice-fields to a little grey brick house which stood alone on the edge of a walled village. As we walked up two Chinese boys appeared at the door, smiling with that large smile of amusement and welcome which cheers one all over China.

"This is all I have to show you," said the official. "Let's go in."

We entered and found ourselves in a stone-floored room, the only room on the ground floor of the house. There was a rough wooden table in the centre, and a stool to either side; and, in the rear, a place was curtained off in which meals might be prepared. The greyness of much of Chinese life seemed to pervade that room, and yet, with contrasting cheerfulness, there stood the two smiling Chinese boys, proudly pointing out the beauties of their home.

"They are two students," said the official; "they know a little English, but not much. They live here quite alone, with just one boy to get them their food. They have no material ambition whatsoever. All they desire is a little money for books and food, and that they can earn easily enough by teaching. I met them first because I found that they wanted to read Greek. I believe they are the only people in Hong Kong or Kowloon who read Homer every day."

The students insisted that we should sit down on the only two stools while they continued standing, and tea was brought. I began one of those desultory conversations in which some third person translates and retranslates, and in the process of which most of the point and subtlety disappears. They were not, I found, interested in wars or *tuchuns*. It was a great pity that China had civil war, one of them confessed, but it did not interest or affect them very much. They had no opinions on extra-territoriality, or *likin*; indeed, they regarded these matters as affairs of commerce that, they hoped, would never concern them at all. For some time the students and I talked at one another in this way, the official interpreting, until at last they asked if I should like to see their studies.

"That is rather a privilege," the official said, "but I hoped they would ask you sooner or later."

The boys led the way up the uncarpeted stair on the right side of their living-room, and there was the study of the elder. It is difficult to show what an impression simple things may sometimes make upon

the mind—that room with its small iron bedstead, its stone-like pillow, the little rough table, and the few shelves of unpolished wood! Yet those few shelves of paper-covered Chinese books contained all the learning of Confucius, much of that of Buddha, and some of that of Christ, along with endless narratives of the forty centuries of Chinese histories; and a few volumes of the Loeb classics stood out amid the rest in their stiff cloth covers. The official was speaking.

"They get up at dawn," he said, "and except for food—rice with a little chicken—they will work right on until eight or nine o'clock at night. They walk a little every three hours or so, watching every minute change in Nature in the fields and paths near by. Now, you imagine any Western boy competing with that, or even having the stamina to do it if he tried. And then our publicists say that the 'psychic flame' is burning low in the Chinese."

"Philosophy and history," I said. "And do they read nothing else?"

"Nothing! And why should they? There are not many like them in any part of the world. Why shouldn't a few people be left alone to think, while the rest of us fiddle about pretending to do things and looking important. The Chinese have more logical minds than any race in the world: the Indians contemplate and lose themselves in the complications of their own introspections; the Japanese live like philosophers sometimes, but they don't think. All I wish to do is to help these two Chinese boys to go on thinking as they think now. The danger is that

commerce or prosperity may turn them away from the discipline."

The two boys insisted that we should see the other study as well, so we went down the stairs, across the living-room, and up the other stairs, to find ourselves in a room which was an absolute replica of the other.

"They are studying Confucius," said the official, as he picked up a paper-covered volume which lay open on the table. "They are not just reading it, but wrestling with every word of it."

A little later we left them, and made our way out of the little walled village, back through the rice-fields to the waiting car.

"That is all I had to show you," said the official. "It is a little of the good that was in old China; of the bad you will hear more than enough. Missionaries, business men, and politicians, they are all so anxious to give China something. It is time we took something from China. She has a civilization older than ours, and we might gain more than we know if only we went out to seek. When people talk to you of China, just keep in your mind the picture of those two boys getting up in the dawn to study Homer and Confucius."

ENCOUNTER XIX

WITH A MIXED MARRIAGE

IT was on the balcony of a house in Shanghai. I had been asked by a friend to visit a Mr. Andusai, a Japanese, and one of the most astute merchants in the port.

"He can tell you more than anyone else about trade in the interior, and he's quite clean. In the Shanghai Club some of them may tell you that Andusai has handled everything from guns to morphia, but that is just jealousy. He knows his way all over the interior, and the Chinese like him. Wars or no wars, he can make his way up the Yangtse, and the Chinese will buy from him when they refuse to deal with anyone else. Yes; even when the anti-Japanese feeling was at its highest Andusai moved about freely and came to no harm."

The offer was not so attractive as it seemed: I had met before these mystery-men, and one thing I found about them—that they do not make their mysteries a topic for drawing-room talk. I suppose this should have been obvious from the first; but it took me a long time to learn. It would be amusing to look at Andusai's pale, stolid, impenetrable face, and to hear him say, "You like Shanghai, yes?" but that was all the entertainment I expected.

Andusai's house stood in the Japanese Concession, but it was Western in architecture; and when the Chinese servant had opened the door I could see that it was Western in furnishing—not that heavy Victorian style which Orientals usually adopt, but light, modern furnishings. A few good pieces stood amid the pure colour washes of the walls. Andusai, I thought, must possess æsthetic as well as commercial acuteness.

"Mister Andusai on balcony," said the Chinese servant; "missy with him."

"Missy?" So there was a Mrs. Andusai, although I had not heard of her. Probably one of those dull, Westernized Japanese women who say, "You have been to Paris?" and then, having exhausted their English, lapse into a heavy silence.

The Chinese boy led us through room after room of the spacious house, until at last we came to a drawing-room with large French windows, heavily shuttered. As he opened these, there was disclosed to us on the balcony the figure of a fat, swarthy Japanese in grey tweeds, ready to greet us.

"Come on! Hallo! Glad to see. You like tea? Yes? Boy, fetch tea. Ha." And then, with a trick he must have learnt from the American colony, "Meet Mrs. Andusai."

And so we met Mrs. Andusai. At first I could not place her nationality: all that one could see was her beauty. Clear-skinned, white and red, like an Englishwoman at her best, with fine black hair, more fine by contrast with the thick, short crop of her husband. She stood to greet us, with a smile on her lips and an inscrutable sadness in her eyes. A moment later we

were seated, and an uncomfortable silence had gripped us all. Cigarettes and tea arrived, and through the smoke one could see these two heads, man and woman, husband and wife, Japanese and . . . but still I was not sure.

Andusai played exactly the part I had expected. Did I like Shanghai? Was I going to Japan? Would I not be late for cherry-blossom? Had I been to Calcutta? He smiled widely and inanely as he asked these questions, and stared in a blank, unchanging way as I answered. At times he turned to my friend and asked a few questions about cotton prices and the movement of cargo-boats. Mrs. Andusai smoked on with half-closed eyes, as if it was her body alone that rested there on the balcony at Shanghai: her mind and soul one might imagine to be removed somewhere indefinitely far away. Soon the two business men were gossiping away in that garrulous fashion of men of commerce all over the world. There were prospects of a war in China, and every one who had anything to sell was attempting to adjust cargoes and freight to be ahead of the outbreak of conflict.

"Not till the Fall," I heard Andusai say. "The Chinese, he take harvest first; then, when he not busy, he fight."

My friend was not so sure: the Chinese were taking war more seriously: we Westerners had taught them that: he was sure that they might fight at any minute.

"The Chinese, he wise man," Andusai grinned; "he have harvest first."

More and more Mrs. Andusai and I were being pushed out of the talk. Not that she had ever been in it. She

had said " Good evening " to us in a strange foreign way, and then had been silent. Husband and wife had not spoken to each other all the time we had been there. He looked mostly at his shoes, and kicked his heels together : she looked straight in front of her at something she could not see. I sat wondering what her nationality could possibly be. European ? Perhaps ; yet there was something strangely un-Western about her.

" Boy, a cigarette." She had spoken at last. A Chinese boy brought a box from the drawing-room.

" Light it," she said. The box of matches was on the table beside her ; if she had stretched out her hand she could have reached it. I suppose I must have looked surprised, for she turned to me and said :

" It is a lazy life, here. I do not light even a cigarette myself." She blew a stream of blue smoke on to the night air.

She spoke English idiomatically, yet with a foreign accent I could not detect. I was puzzling over this and said nothing in reply, only smiled.

" Have you ever been to Moscow ? " she said after a moment.

Then it came rushing in upon me. Here was a Russian refugee, a White Russian, perhaps a princess. Some Soviet oppression had driven her from her country, and here she was sheltered from the " street " and fed by this Japanese. So did world movements take up and crush individuals with devastating ruthlessness. I told her that I was sorry, but that Russia was one of the places I had missed in my travels. She was silent for a moment, and then said :

"It was my country. I had a hard time there."

Her eyes, still half-closed, were as inscrutable as ever: one could only guess at the weight of experience behind those two brief phrases. She spoke no more. Apart from the incident with the match, all that she had said was, "Have you ever been to Moscow?" and "It was my country. I had a hard time there."

I sat back in silence, looking at the face dimly outlined through the haze of cigarette smoke, and tried to picture her story. How had she made that journey from Moscow to Shanghai? I had met groups of Russians in Calcutta and in Malay, and had heard their stories of incredible journeys through Afghanistan and through Mongolia in their attempts to reach some country where they might live with a possibility of safety. They told me cruel stories of the straits to which their womenfolk were reduced. One could see the circle of this girl in Moscow before the Revolution—operas, theatres, French and English novels, a gay social life, with dances and *salons* and love-making; and then suddenly flight through the lands of strange, hostile peoples, with degradations which are better left unimagined. And, finally, this bondage of marriage to a fat Japanese, who clicked his heels and thought about nothing except cargo-boats and cotton; a bondage she must have endured now for some seven years. . . . It was as if the brutal elements in life were rising up to overcome the beautiful, and crushing them to extinction. I was beginning to wish I had never been brought to meet this Andusai fellow, so depressing had the effect of the evening been upon me. . . .

At that moment the veranda doors were flung boisterously open, and a well-grown boy stood before us. He looked Japanese, and yet he was Japanese with a difference. Andusai grinned at him.

"Ivan has come. Where you been?" And then once more, with that American turn of phrase which he had used earlier, "Meet our son." He looked proudly across to his wife. "Fine boy! Fourteen years, last month!"

"Oh," said my friend, as we drove back out of the Japanese Concession, "he married her back in 1910. It was a pure love match. She had quarrelled with her mother over some suitor in Moscow whom her mother thought desirable, and in a fit of pique she ran away from home and collared most of the family jewellery to take with her. The mother could have got her back easily if she had got in touch with the police, but the old lady was too proud for that. She tried to track the young minx down by sending her brothers after her, but she got away. Those were the days when the Trans-Siberian was the most magnificent railway in Europe. Andusai met her when she had somehow found her way to Tientsin and was trying to dispose of the family jewellery. They loved each other from the very first. Andusai's straight, too: he made her send the family treasures back to Moscow, though it did nothing to reconcile the family.

"Charming woman! It's that far-away look in her eyes that gets people. A Russian who passed through here a few years back said that that look brought nearly all Moscow to her feet when she first came out in '08."

ENCOUNTER XX

WITH RODIN IN SHANGHAI

WHEN I reached Shanghai the first man I looked for was Michel Rodin. I had heard in Hong Kong that he was due back from the Interior, and every one had said, " If you want anything approaching the truth about this country, dig out Rodin. He can tell you."

As a matter of fact I knew that. It was ten years ago when I first met Rodin in the *Select* café in Mont Parnasse. He was then on the Paris staff of a London daily. Even in those days he was something of a mystery. We all knew which public school he had been to, but for some strange reason he had missed going to a University. No one knew who were his people. It was rumoured that in reality he was an Italian, that his mother had married an Italian count of most ancient blood, but finding life too difficult had fled to England with her infant son. Rodin never spoke about it, and although many told the story no one knew if it was true or not.

On that night in the *Select* Rodin had told me that he was going to China. He was immensely enthusiastic about the Chinese : they were the finest people on earth, and the only race with any real culture.

He would learn the language—one believed him : he had a genius for tongues—and would write them up. No one had done justice to them ; but he would spend the rest of his life, if it were necessary, in showing the world what a fine people they were.

Ten years had passed. I had never had a line from Rodin ; but then, he seldom wrote to anybody. What was stranger was that no work of his on China had appeared, not even a newspaper article, and in Paris Rodin's average output was five thousand words a day. Rumour and mystery followed Rodin to China, as it had followed him everywhere else, and from time to time one had heard strange stories. Rodin was a spy in the pay of the United States Government, finding out the condition of political feeling on the Yangtse ; he was a pseudo-general under Chang Tso Lin in charge of arsenals ; he was peddling pills in Honan ; he had married a Chinese wife in Canton and was selling jade. The last story I heard was that he was up in Mongolia trading in furs. . . . And now I was to break through it all, see Rodin himself, and find out the truth.

No one in Shanghai seemed to know where I might find Rodin : he was there somewhere, but no one knew exactly where. I had nearly despaired of finding him, when one day I was standing at noon in the Shanghai Bar. The Shanghai Bar is reputed to be the longest in the world, and with the exception of one in Tua Juana, on the Mexican Border, I know of nothing that can dispute the claim. At noon the whole of the business world of Shanghai seems gathered there—one mass of garrulous humanity.

Suddenly, through the smoke and men, I saw Rodin alone on a stool in one corner of the immense room. I crossed at once to where he was sitting. He looked paler and thinner than I had ever seen him, his eyes sunken, his lips, which had once given him gaiety, loose and drooping. A few empty glasses stood beside him. He recognized me at once.

"Good lord! What are you doing in this cursed country?"

"I'm looking at it."

"Then take my advice and get out of it. You're in the habitation of the most deceitful and ungrateful race in the world. . . . Same again for me, boy."

"Once you liked them," I said.

"Once I knew nothing about them—damn all the ignorant nonsense I talked. Well, I know something about them now, and I'm shut of them."

"From what I've seen of them, I like them," I ventured.

"And what in heaven's name have you seen of them? I suppose you went to Hong Kong, Kowloon, Canton, and you're here. You'll go on to Peking if the railways are running, and then you'll clear out. What do you know about them? I've been here for ten years and I know. And I wish I didn't.

"Listen. You'll hear more nonsense talked up and down this country than anywhere else in the world. The sentimentalists who want to make China Christian, and who stalk up and down the world telling the Chinese what a wonderful people they are, seem to have captured the white races who have

had any hand in things here. What do the sentimentalists or the people at home know about the Chinese? They spout cant that the Chinese are the most cultured people in the world. Culture! I would like to make them sleep a week in some Chinese cities that I know, where the stench sticks in your throat like a knife. Once the Chinese were great; I am prepared to admit that, and also that it was in the days when we were barbarians. But that is all over. The flame is burning low in them now. Laziness and conceit—that's all they have left to comfort themselves with."

Rodin was speaking at an immense rate, and in a nervous, high-pitched voice. One had the impression of masses of talk surging out of him; only at times was he really coherent. I was bewildered by the man I saw, and still more by what he said. I had expected from Rodin a sympathetic appreciation of this great people, presented with something of that disarming gaiety which used to be his main charm. I give as much of what he said as I could make out: towards the end of our talk I doubt if he was sober. His own story he refused to give me, and I could only guess. I know little of opium-smoking, but there was a certain pallor of the face and a sunken hardness of the eyes which suggested that he had learnt the use of that drug. Once, as he leaned forward for his drink, his cuff was pushed back. I may be wrong, but I imagined that I saw the tell-tale punctures of the morphia addict. And this was what China had done for the Rodin I once knew. It was at his suggestion that a few moments later

we left the Club and entered a little bar near by. He talked the whole time.

"I've been all over this country," he said in his rapid voice, "and I've seen through them. Their politeness is just a sham to cover their cruelty. I've seen them torture each other and torture animals. Once they had me. . . . I starved in this country, and they laughed when I begged a little rice from them. I worked for them at first . . . but, Lord! they were just vultures preying on me. I'm frightened when I'm alone with them now, dead frightened like a kid."

"Why not come back to Europe?"

"I can't," he said, "it's hopeless; you don't understand. I have to go back in amongst them. It works like a charm. There is some damnable spirit at work in this country, and it's got hold of me. I booked my passage once for Japan, and then the night I was due to sail I fled away inland again. I shall never get them out of my mind. . . . I dream of their yellow faces . . . and one in the middle grinning at me . . . his throat cut.

"Ask them at home," he burst out, "what they mean to do with this country. I know the soft flabby talk they'll answer you with. 'We'll let China struggle through in her own way,' they'll say, 'and once she has settled her internal difficulties we will form a friendly alliance with her.' Humbug! China can't settle her internal difficulties. One *tuchun* will follow another, and each one in turn will bleed the country and then scuttle away to some foreign concession or to Japan to enjoy the spoils.

If the Powers had an ounce of courage they would take command here and govern the country. I am not a believer in the Nordic heresy, but we Anglo-Saxon people are the only race in the world that understands order and government. The Chinese are too selfish and too corrupt ever to govern themselves—cruel without courage is all they are—and the Powers are too cowardly to spare a few troops and a few gunboats, which could settle the whole question in a couple of months.

"Yes, I know it's too late in the day for gunboats: we must play the big brother policy, teach the Chinese to be good and kind, and make them all into nice Christians. That's America's game, and she hopes it will bring in good dividends. Bless them! They'll have to pay for this loose game one day. Do you think the Chinese love us? They hate every man of us and, if they were not afraid, they would kill us all to-morrow. Oh, yes, they would; you can hear them talk about it as you move up and down the country. The only thing that keeps them quiet is fear. We gave them a fright after the Boxer business and, thank heaven, they still remember it. But if we do much more of this soft-soap game they'll forget that we ever scared them and have another Boxer business. Only this time they'll do it thoroughly.

"I know you'll tell me that the Chinese you've met are the kindest and politest people on earth. Of course they are: they'll tell you any lie they think you might wish to hear, but don't think you are within miles of understanding their minds. I

have met you travelling sentimentalists before : you'll get home and write about the reasonableness of the Chinese. Why, they are the most cruel people on earth. I remember once, in plague time, passing a large Chinese village. Every one, man, woman or child, who sickened for the plague was put outside the village and left, without food or water, to die. So much for their sweet reasonableness !

" We would cleanse this country if only we had the courage to do it. Soft-soap won't do it. Everything the Chinese do is done for the sake of ' face ' —the eternal game of keeping up appearances—and we are fools enough to play up to it. We are letting the militarists bleed the country because we haven't the courage to interfere. Once the Anglo-Saxon people believed in themselves, and we did good in the world. Look at Shanghai. It was once a flat swamp : the Chinese gave it to us for a joke. We've made it one of the finest cities in China to-day, and Chinese are fighting each other for the right to live in it.

" One day they'll wipe us out, yes, every man of us. They're cowards, these Chinese, but they'll find the courage to do that. Perhaps then these Powers will come to their senses, just as they did after the Boxer business. But we'll have to pay. I can see them closing in around us, masses of yellow faces. I shall go out—they'll get me all right—but," and he laughed, " but they'll get the others as well. The missionaries will go too : they'll rid them . . . soft-soap and big brother . . . the missionaries think the Chinese love that, but they'll see. We're all poison

in the nostrils of these people." He laughed again. "Lord . . . Lord . . . how hopeless it is."

He clutched once more at his glass, but his hand slipped, and he started as the glass fell. A hard, mad look came into his eyes.

"You, white man or yellow man. . . . I hate white man . . . red-headed devil. . . . I hate everything. . . ." He shuddered, and with an effort pulled himself together. "Get away, old man," he said, "I'm drunk . . . dead drunk; leave me in here. I'm all right. I'll get away. To-morrow I'll tell you about China . . . great country China, damn them . . . in my dreams. Lord, how hopeless it all is."

ENCOUNTER XXI

WITH TWO WOMEN MISSIONARIES

I

SHE was sleeping at last, the firm mouth tightly shut, the masses of golden hair leaning against the window in a corner of the carriage, and her legs tucked up beneath her on the seat. She and I and two Chinese were the sole occupants of a carriage on the Blue Express that runs from Shanghai to Peking. The two Chinese sat opposite to her, a spittoon on the floor between them. For hours they had talked and spat; now they only spat and stared at the girl in front of them. Side by side in their black and grey-blue silks, they stared perpetually from horn-rimmed spectacles at the sleeping form. In her brown tweeds and with her fair hair she made a strange contrast to them, the warmth and colour of her, bright against their dull Mongolian pallor.

She had told me her story as we had sat opposite each other in the luncheon-car earlier that day. Extremely knowledgeable she had shown herself from the first, and it was by her advice that I had avoided the set menu of canned American food and ordered a special dish of most excellent chicken and rice. An evangelical missionary with a B.A. degree of the

University of Birmingham. She was from a missionary family, and had thought it fun to come out to China rather than become a Burnham Scale teacher somewhere in the provinces of England. She was seven-and-twenty, though she looked younger, and with her laughing face and thick shingled hair one might have taken her to be the most care-free soul in the world.

Never by looking at her could one have guessed at her mind or her determination. She was passionately religious, passionately evangelical. The whole of nineteenth-century thought, with its attack on the simpler forms of faith, had passed her by; she believed in a heaven above and in a hell beneath, and her work was to save as many heathen Chinese as she could from utter damnation. With an effect of strange incongruity, she would talk one moment of how she played in the hockey eleven at Birmingham, and the next of how terrible a place the after-world would be for these unbelieving Chinese.

"I do not care," she had said, "as much for educating them as the Americans do, or for setting up medical missions. I want to save their souls. After all, that is the most important thing, isn't it?" I had just let her talk: my mind was too opposed to hers for argument to be possible, and I had no desire to quarrel with her infectious jollity. She spoke Chinese perfectly, and for three years she had wandered through the Interior occupied with her work of evangelism. She had crowded more adventures into those three years than most of us can hope to achieve in a life of threescore years and ten. No

harm had come to her, though often she had been in danger. She had slept on the bare ground of leaking Chinese huts in the rainy season, and yet risen the next day apparently perfectly fit to go on with her task. Once she had been in a boat along with six bandits, who had discussed among themselves whether they should seduce this " red-headed devil " of a girl. Perhaps they did not know that she understood Chinese as well as they did ! Once she had been chased out of a village in the belief that she was a bringer of plagues, and had not an old Christian Chinese woman sheltered her she would certainly have been killed. All of this, and much more, she had told me in a matter-of-fact way, as if it were part of some mechanical routine.

" And are you never afraid ? " I asked.

" Afraid ! Of course I am ; hundreds of times. But I don't think any real harm will come to me. I feel sure that Christ is looking after me."

One question I did venture to ask her.

" Do you really think harm will come to Chinese who are not Christians ? "

She paused.

" I'm different from the old people there," she replied with an air of dangerous modernity ; " even if they don't become Christians I feel that no harm will come to them. I think God will look after them, but I am sure He wanted us to help them. Perhaps it will be on us that He will be severe, because we have neglected our work."

* * * * *

It was evening : we were approaching Tientsin.

She still slept, and the Chinese, smoking their small-bowled, long-stemmed pipes, still stared. She had bewildered me and captivated me. I can usually close my heart to the dogmatic missionary who preaches hell-fire to bludgeon an Asiatic into a faith which he cannot understand. But this girl was different. She had accepted the faith of her fathers in the simplest of forms, believed in it, and risked her life a hundred times to propagate it.

The train drew up at Tientsin with one of those sudden jerks with which Chinese drivers seem to amuse themselves at the expense of their passengers. She awoke.

"Tientsin," she said sleepily. "I get out here." I volunteered help with her kit-bag and said my good-bye.

"I have talked a lot," she said at the last minute; "do forgive me. There is one thing, though. I don't think God could ever be very unkind to these Chinese. I do love them so—but did I say that before?"

With that she left me. The train started with another sudden jerk, and at the corner where the girl had been lying the two Chinese continued to stare.

II

I met her on the campus of a Mission College in Northern China. She hailed from Illinois, and for some reason or other the President of the College had asked her to be my guide around the College buildings.

"This campus," she said, "is one-half of a mile

square, and this, I reckon, is the largest missionary institution in the province."

I was prepared to believe it, for we seemed to have been walking for hours through endless class-rooms and laboratories, and then class-rooms again. At last she allowed us to sit down on a bench in one of the playing-fields and watch Chinese boys endeavouring to play baseball.

"And what," I asked, "do you think of missionary work in China?"

"What do you mean?" she said. "Of course I believe in giving the helping hand to these poor folk."

"Do you know many of them?"

"Well, I have an *amah* for the children, and there's the boy who cooks and a coolie; and I suppose I know Dr. Zu who comes to talk theories of population with Jack sometimes. And how he does talk! Of course I'm not a missionary proper, you know. I married Jack and came over as his wife."

"Your husband has devoted his life to the work, I suppose?"

"Say, I suppose not," she replied. "Jack's out here for another three years, no more. He's a journalist, really, and he still sends in dispatches to the *Post*. They wanted a man who would be an expert in Far-Eastern affairs, so Jack came out here to a mission institution. He teaches them industrial history. Jack's an A.B. Economics of Illinois. He preaches on Sunday sometimes in chapel, but he is broad, very broad. I'm an Illinois graduate too—Science. Jack and I married on the day after 'Com-

mencement' and came straight out here. We get back to Illinois next summer," she added.

"You must look forward to that."

"Say, I'm not sure," she replied. "With those little children, I shall have to be up at six every morning in Illinois. *Amah* is very good here, and cook loves the children. Sometimes I wish we were going to stay out here in China."

"You'd learn the language, I suppose, and really get to know the people?"

"It wasn't that so much, but we're a tidy colony of American citizens on the campus here."

III

I travelled from Mukden to Korea in an empty carriage, and I kept thinking hour after hour of these women. Were they typical, or were they such oddities whom I had chanced to meet?—the one devoting herself to an ideal which it might be difficult to understand, and the other a parasitic creature flourishing in a strange land.

ENCOUNTER XXII

WITH THE CHINESE SCENE

I NEVER saw China. One just scratches the surface of that great continent, and then only in a few places. One remembers strange unnecessary things, which bob up into the memory and take the place of other incidents better worth remembering. These things I do remember :

I

I remember the smells at Fatshan, the city of Buddha's Mountain near Canton. The smells of Fatshan are the strangest and most pungent I have met anywhere in the East. There are times and places in Singapore when smells arise which capture the nose more completely, but one usually knows where they are coming from : from tanneries, or rubber works, or some industrial centre. But Fatshan has strong smells, vegetable smells, manurey smells, lurid smells, murky smells. No one knows their precise cause : they seem part of the social life of the town, but they grow in strength at every moment, until you feel that they will sweep you out of consciousness like a blast of chloroform. I do not know exactly from what ill vapour cholera comes,

but I imagined at the time that cholera must come from smelling these very smells.

Why is it that no one has worked out a history of human smells? There may be some such treatise, but I have never met it. Perhaps some Burton has written an *Anatomy of Smells*, and humanity, with its finicky sense of "what is nice," has allowed the all-essential book to rot on its library shelves unread. How dull we are to the odours that are beautiful, the smell of the sea at morning, the smell of rain, and

> " . . . the good smell of old clothing. . . .
> The comfortable smell of friendly fingers,
> Hair's fragrance, and the musty reek that lingers
> About dead leaves and last year's ferns."

If only we could recapture the ecstasy of these, and enjoy the sense of smelling with the rapture of a dog in a wood.

But in Fatshan I wished I had no nose. The town, except around the station, is almost unspoilt by Western intrusion. How beautiful it would have been if one could have suspended the sense of smell: the glamour of the shop signs, blue and red and gold; the dim interiors; the butcher shops, with rows of cold chickens of a brownness which one cannot find in any other country in the world; the narrow streets, so narrow that one jostles one's way through the crowd. China has always been a democracy in spirit, the democracy of the road like that of Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims. And the coolie is the master of the road. They trot through the streets carrying their loads suspended from a long pole which is balanced between them. Once the coolie has given

his grunting call to warn you that he is coming you must, if you are a decent citizen, step to one side; if you do not, you may the very next moment feel the pole prodding into your back. To give way to a coolie is a duty which even a *tuchun* could not easily avoid.

II

It was in a street in old Canton. We heard noises, and through the thick human crowd we could see a procession with banners approaching. I asked my friend what it meant.

"It may be a wedding or a funeral. From the music I think it is a funeral. Personally, I can never see much difference." And the procession came on.

First there were three Chinese dressed in red, beating on drums; two more with wind instruments followed. Next came a young Japanese in Western dress, borne in a chair by four Chinese coolies. He was scattering leaflets on every side to the crowd, but as they were written in Chinese characters we were still not much wiser. A second Japanese followed, also in a chair, with four Chinese coolies as pole-bearers. He was throwing little yellow packets to the crowd, which pressed eagerly around him and even fought one another for his *largesse*. As he passed us he pushed one of the little yellow packets into our hands, and then grinned, as if he understood the whole business to be rather a joke. The rear of the procession, with more trumpets, more drums and more Chinese dressed in red, pushed by us and wedged its way up the narrow street.

We opened the little yellow packet, and found inside a small bottle of white powder and a wrapper with an inscription in Chinese and in English: "Epicurean Powder or Savoury Salt, invented by Dr. A., Professor at the . . . University, Kobe. The Effectual Extract of Digestive Flavouring. White odourless powder of vegetable origin . . . a pinch of this powder added to food of any kind, in the same manner as table salt, improves its taste and flavour while making it nutritious and easily digestible."

So did Western methods—Western methods via Japan—intrude themselves into the Canton street that afternoon. It was part of the perpetual game of creating in the Chinese demands and desires which they cannot afford. One was left wondering what effect this campaign of the "Essence of Dietary" had on Canton that day. Certainly the crowd enjoyed the procession—there was much rushing for pamphlets and still more for powder; but when rice-time came, I wonder how many of the Chinese of Canton added a pinch of the "Essence of Dietary Flavour" to their bowls of food.

III

I first saw a rickshaw in Calcutta: further west than that men are not beasts of burden to other men. I never rode in a rickshaw in Calcutta—pukka sahibs were not expected to—and I did not think much about the subject.

It was in Singapore that rickshaws first became inevitable, and one hot afternoon I allowed a puffing

Chinese to drag me for an hour through the streets of that sultry town.

I sat back, and watched a little patch of sweat form in the middle of his light blue vest, and stain it to a dark Oxford blue. Gradually, as he ran on and on, the patch enlarged, and spread out to one side and another until the whole of his back was one dripping stretch of flesh covered by a soaked rag of deep blue. It was repulsive, and I felt ashamed of myself for having hired the man at all: he was a man as I was, and yet I hired him and made him toil as if he were an animal. But I could not help remembering the eager grin of pleasure which covered his whole face when I chose him from some half-dozen others who had all rushed at me in anticipation of a job.

On the boat to Hong Kong I thought out the problem of rickshaws, and felt that, however illogical it might be, I would not ride in one again. I liked the Chinese and I could not let them drag me about the streets. At moments I flattered myself that this decision was not without moral strength; but for the most part I felt it rather sentimental, and I was not a little ashamed. Still, I had made a decision, and I would keep to it.

And in Hong Kong I was faithful to my resolve, for the simple reason that there were plenty of taxis. I congratulated myself that the solution had been so easy, and I was determined that it should be maintained throughout China.

Then there came a night in Canton when a man, J., a trader, and I had been invited out to dinner together.

"We'll take rickshaws," said J.

"I'm sorry," I said, and I felt as I said it that J. would probably think that I was mad, "I'm sorry, but I don't ride in rickshaws."

J. missed my point completely; he thought that I was merely attempting to be superior.

"Don't ride in rickshaws? My dear man, you'll soon have to learn in Canton. There's no other way of getting about."

There was no time to argue, for at least a dozen rickshaw-boys had crowded around us, each one of them begging for our patronage. I gave way, and a few moments later I was being pulled through Canton at the tail of J.'s rickshaw.

"Hurry up, damn you!" said J. to his boy, and then, over his back, to me, "It's the only way to make them understand. Just animals, these boys, just animals."

I thought for the moment that this would be a single lapse forced on me by circumstance, but I found in Peking that if I was to move about at all it must be in a rickshaw, and again and again I succumbed. Indeed, my main memory of the Temple of Heaven is white marble in a haze of spring, willow-herb lying everywhere in thick purple streams on the grass, and the hacking consumptive cough of a Chinese rickshaw-puller. I tried to be kind to those coolies in Peking. I never quarrelled with them if they asked too much or trotted slowly; I felt myself in the wrong, and so allowed them their minor victories of deception.

The end came one day in Tientsin. I had an

important appointment with a newspaper editor, a man who did not like to be kept waiting. I was staying at a missionary settlement at the other end of the city, and as if by habit, and certainly without much thought, I called a rickshaw-boy. He trotted at an aggravatingly slow pace, as if time were a concept that had never entered his mind.

"Get on! Get on!" I shouted. For the moment his pace increased, and then declined again almost at once to a speed which seemed like a slow-motion picture of a walk. I looked at my watch: I was already ten minutes late, and as yet we were not within sight of anything that could possibly be a newspaper office. It was some ten minutes after that when I stopped the boy and asked a passing European if I was anywhere near A.'s office. He smiled.

"He's been taking you in completely the opposite direction. Let me get you another boy, and I will direct him for you."

I turned to the culprit puller, who stood with a completely blank expression on his face.

"Confound you!" I said, "take that," and I threw a ten-cent piece on the road in front of him.

I had gone through my graduation between the sentimentality of Singapore and this strong Nordic attitude in Tientsin. Yet I wish it had not been, and sometimes I wonder what mood I would possess had I lived a whole *lustrum* in the Far East.

IV

We were waiting at Nanking for the Blue Express to begin its fast flight north to the capital of All-

China. On the platform opposite Chinese porters were unloading live ducks, which a few hours later would be on sale in the markets of Nanking. The birds had travelled on the tops of the trucks, tied together by their legs into bundles of six, and to unload them porters just threw them, bundle after live bundle, on the stone platform below. One moment you might see a struggling mass of birds on the top of the truck; the porter would jerk this away; there would be a whirl of wings, a thud, and half-stunned, half-dead ducks would lie on the platform below.

To my Western mind the scene was hideous, and, irrationally enough, I would willingly have dropped those porters any number of feet as a punishment for the cruelty which so needlessly they brought upon those birds. There was nothing one could do, and as long as one listened there sounded monotonously, regularly, inevitably, thud . . . thud . . . thud. To the logical Chinese mind, logical without sentiment, I suppose it must have been very simple. The ducks had soon to die, and what did it matter if one half-killed them a few hours before their final extinction?

Our train began to move and yet, fascinated in some manner I cannot describe, I continued to watch those bundles of birds on the platform, their heads and necks stretched out weak and motionless, pleading as it were for death, but writhing at times with that little of painful life which was left in them. Two soldiers passed them and stared at them in an expressionless way. One kicked at a duck with his

foot, watched it wriggle, and, still expressionless, passed on.

We steamed out of Nanking, and with that maddening inconsecutiveness of the human mind I could not help remembering the number of times I had enjoyed roast duck in China, dainty with all that exquisite brownness and tenderness which only Chinese cooks can impart to the dish.

V

One day a friend of mine brought me to a Chinese village whose head-man he knew. It was a very ordinary little place, without even a stone wall round it, and one which no traveller would ever have dreamt of visiting had not some one told him that it would be worth while. One's first impression was of innumerable chow dogs, well-fed and fierce-looking, who growled and barked at any stranger. Then men and women, dressed in little blue coats and blue trousers, came out of their houses to prevent the dogs from doing any harm. They smiled at you ever so kindly, and stared as if their eyes were fixed upon you by some enchantment.

The house of the head-man was superlatively unprepossessing: it looked like the yard and stable of an English farm. Sons and daughters and womenfolk stood about doing nothing apparently, but doing it very pleasantly; or perhaps they had all been busy a moment before, and had dropped their tasks to stare at us—two strange "red-heads" who had bustled into the midst of them.

Some one called the head of the family, who was

also the head of the village. He came, an old man dressed in faded blue silk, a black cap on his head and a small-bowled Chinese pipe in his hand. For a time we talked, the few inanities which people exchange when they attempt to converse politely through an interpreter. Then, as we were leaving, he went to a chest at the back of the room and brought out a book and opened it. Suddenly the whole of our visit to that village had a new significance: all was illuminated with a memory of beauty suddenly and unexpectedly encountered. For that book was full of delicate Chinese paintings, birds and trees and bridges and men. I know nothing of Chinese art, but there was in each of those pictures a charm communicable beyond the vocabulary of any racial artistic convention. The old man fondled them gently one by one, and made some remark, which I did not understand, about each one of them, pointing out each element in the design which pleased him, the flight of a bird, the delicate line of a tree or flower. Afterwards my friend told me they had been made eight hundred years ago, when a relation of the old man had followed the Court. They had been in the family ever since.

As we walked away from that village I wondered once again what was to happen to China. Eight hundred years ago, when that relation gained Court favour, the life of this village was very much as we had seen it to-day. Yet a few fields away there were Chinese practising the goose-step at the orders of Russian officers. Here was one quarter of the world's

population living in a pre-industrial world. Was China to be industrialized? Why? Was it that the mesdames of the wealthy vulgar merchants should be able to smoke and play mah-jong, and drink cocktails before breakfast? Or was the technique of Western civilization, roads, railways, firing-arms and factories, intrinsically worth while? And if China learnt the technique, would she not outrun us in the game of production, with her men, women and children all capable of a twelve-hour day? She would outstrip the West, for she would be free from all the humanitarian legislation which has put a curb to Western industrial methods. . . . And pushing its way amid these enigmas came the picture of those two Chinese boys rising in the dawn to read Confucius.

ENCOUNTER XXIII

WITH LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

I MET him one night on the Ginza, Tokyo's illuminated shopping road, and what interested me from the first was his shabbiness. One is used to shabby Englishmen in England, but in the East it seems a moral crime against one's race to be disreputable. It was not only that his clothes were unkempt, and that his face was dubiously shaved; he had the gesture and the furtiveness of a "tout."

I had been watching a hawker of fire-flies disputing the possession of his stand on the road with a vendor of paper umbrellas, when this strange Englishman accosted me and asked if I would like to see the night-life of Tokyo—the tea-houses and the Yoshiwara—all the real things, you know. I refused, and yet the man himself attracted me; something in his eyes and the poise of his head suggested that his story was not a simple one, and the sickened secretiveness of his manner showed that his present occupation did not please him. What happened next I do not know, but I remember that finally I asked him to give up his "touting" for the night and come and dine with me, and he consented, a little over-eagerly perhaps.

"I won't go back with you to the Imperial," he said; "I can't, dressed up like this. Will you come where I take you?"

I assented, and a moment after admired my own courage in doing so.

He took me to a strange little café on the Ginza, half-Japanese and half-European, which went by the name of Anglo-American Temperance Café. Five hours later I was making my way back to the Imperial Hotel, and he was walking once more along the Ginza to see if there were not still some stray traveller whom he might show round.

In a tortuous, double-twisting narrative I had heard his tale.

* * * * *

"Twenty years ago it was when I left England: I was tired of it all. I believe I am the last piece of *fin-de-siècle* decadence left alive. How tired I was of all endless controversies on evolution and science and religion which pushed themselves upon one everywhere. I caught desperately at the 'nineties to give me a little pleasure; like Pater said, you know, that if this life is so very short we ought to crowd it up with living, not laze around and make theories about existence. How they did theorize in England twenty years ago and how I hated it.

"I am too young to live without desire,
Too young art thou to waste the summer night
Asking those idle questions which of old
Men sought the seer and oracle and no reply was told.

That's about the only bit of 'nineties poetry I remember, and it's by their worst poet, but it gave me what I felt. I don't know what made me first come East! Perhaps it was Fitzgerald's Omar Khayyám and Flecker's poems, and the fact that I was sick of Europe.

"Never until I die shall I forget the first moment that I touched the East: it was at Alexandria. Those masses of pushing, yelling crowds that watched us come in, the red and orange and white of their clothes, and the amber yellow of their bodies! I drank in the beauty and the muddle of it all and felt that I had come to my own. I worshipped the East then as I have never worshipped any woman in my life. I have never loved a woman, but I loved the East. It was just as if Cleopatra herself stood on the shore at Alexandria to greet me. I had money in those days, and I spent months in the desert just staring at the colours, the blue and the brown, and those yellow smiling bodies who could never argue with me as to whether God was good and the world really progressing. I have lost all that first passion now . . . it's gone altogether, but while it lasted I was alive.

"It was just an accident that led me on from Egypt. I was down in Port Said one day, and there happened to be a boat in due for Bombay, and I booked a passage and went. India I drank in like a dream which holds your mind and body both in one. I suppose it was first impressions again, but when I saw my first Indian dawn with its heavy, red hazy wonder, I forgot everything else I had ever seen in my life. And when the boat came in I remember now seeing

a few silly-looking Europeans and masses of deep-brown coloured coolies, who sat perfectly still along the quay-side. They were such a contrast to the yelling crowd in Alexandria that they gripped me at once. I did not know then what an effect they would have on me. It was their eyes! Damn those eyes! Fierce, impenetrable eyes, as if all the sadness of the world had gathered into them. It was those coolies' eyes that drove me back at last to think of spiritual things. I didn't want to, but I had to.

"I spent years in India and I thought at first that I had found all the happiness I wanted in life, something much deeper than Egypt had given me. The night that I first came to Benares! I shall never forget that. I walked in to the city at sunset. The sun for a moment stood like a ball of gold over the Ganges; suddenly it dipped and disappeared. Smoke and mists rose from the ground in that sudden Eastern night and then, one by one, the shopmen in the narrow streets hung out their lamps. Sometimes that bitter smell of wood-fires of the Indian dusk still comes back to my nostrils. How I loved all those Indians then! I spent hours walking down the little lanes crowded with chattering people, and watched the bazaar-keepers haggling, the beggars with their bowls, and the orange-robed figures, and the sacred cows filching grain at the grain store and no one interfering with them.

"And I really got to know those Indians too—not the Western educated sort, who have lost any individuality they ever had, but the real unspoilt Indians. I suppose I knew more about them, and the secret

of their mysteries, than any other European. I thought I had found the spirit of life in that mood of contemplation which some of those men possessed. I had lost everything in me that was European: the East, which I had loved as soon as I saw her, I had now come to know. I stood outside Western civilization at last. I saw it face to face and I condemned it. This other life I had loved stole over me like an all-absorbing passion, and I allowed myself to be consumed by it. In the West the spirit was diseased, it had contaminated itself and disfigured itself until it was unhealthy and scabby. I disinherited myself from the Western world and I exulted in my disinheritance. In India I dwelt with the spirit. Those were unforgettable years"—he laughed—"perhaps it was worth while.

"And then it came to an end; how, I cannot remember, but this new life broke to pieces, and I had nothing left. At times I think it was sheer sentimentality. I remember walking one evening along a dusty bullock-track in the Deccan, with thin growing millet fields on either side, and I came to one of those heaps of low-stoned dwellings which mark a village. A crowd came out to see me pass through, and I saw again those silent inscrutable eyes of the Indian peasant as I had seen them that first day in Bombay. The utter joylessness of the country fell upon me, and I remembered how long it was since I had laughed. I wished —I know it seems absurd—for English green fields with cows grazing, and then the English evening in a cottage amid the trees, with a log fire and a view through the lattice window of a church on the hill. I

longed, too—don't laugh at me—but I longed for steaming hot tea, hot scones, and melted butter and a stack of soft buttered toast. I was tired of these sun-baked roads and these dusty bullock-tracks, but I had nowhere to go.

" There was more than sentimentality too. I had seen the mysteries too closely : I knew these people. The man who said that a little knowledge is dangerous, is a fool : it is the only safe thing to have in life. Those staring eyes are not eyes of thought, but of exhaustion, burnt-out eyes which have flamed too indiscriminately. The Indian plays himself out, mentally and physically, and the wreck that is left contemplates the eternal. With their child marriages they wreck themselves physically, and the climate finishes what sex began. I lived on in India for a year after that, but it was only because I could not drag myself away : I seemed always living in the night, fumbling . . .

" What happened after that doesn't really matter. I came on farther East and found the Chinese. Dirty, grey country, with four hundred million yellow things grinning at you wherever you went : a sane enough country I suppose, but how I hated it. I never forgot India, and those dark masses who once had given me happiness. The East is a fraud. Don't let her deceive you ! She is dressed up in a thousand colours, bedizened like a harlot, but she is shabby and unclean. She is painted to trick us and the sun helps her ! I said that first crowd at Alexandria had made me think that Cleopatra was there to greet me. She was. This East is Cleopatra : she wins you with her wiles and

then throws you on one side, when you have seen the shallow dirtiness of it all.

" And that's why I am here. I'm glad to have met you. It's eighteen months since I have talked to a white man, except in a way of business. I must go back to the Ginza again to see if there isn't any greenhorn of a tourist still out for me to shark."

And I walked back to the Imperial Hotel, and I wondered if any part of his story was true or if it was just the price that he felt he must pay for his supper.

ENCOUNTER XXIV

WITH JAPAN

I

MY main memory of the Japanese comes not from Japan at all but from an incident on the *T—— Maru*, which was crossing the Pacific from Yokohama to Honolulu. The farewell night on a Japanese boat is celebrated by a social, a very dull affair of mixed speeches and parlour tricks, but yet something which one attends with that large social tolerance proper to all who travel by sea.

A number of Japanese-Americans were returning from the country of their race to the country of their adoption, and one of their number, a youth of about twenty, had been called upon to speak on his impressions of Japan.

"Now in United States," he began, with that emphasized American accent which Orientals seem inevitably to employ, "we make things move. You order a dish of plank-steak in 'Frisco and, say!—it is there before you can get in your first sip at the iced water. But in Japan! Well, it's better to give your order and then go out for a walk and trail back in an hour's time to see how they are getting on with it. Then the roads! Now in 'Frisco we have possibly

the fifth most civilized town in the world. My Ford goes down those streets as smoothly as you might take your girl round a dance-hall. In Tokyo there are only four or five roads on which I would like to make any pace; and then so few folk have cars. It's amazing! I laughed some when they showed me what they called their big buildings. I told them a thing or two about New York. As an American, I'd like to let you folks know . . ."

Opposite him there sat in grave silence a Japanese Count, in the kimono of one of the oldest families in Japan. He was being allowed on sufferance to visit these United States which this boy had so praised. The days had passed when his countrymen might settle there and lose themselves in a new citizenship. Of the merits of that controversy I cannot speak. I judged of this incident emotionally, and I felt the profound sadness with which the old man who remained with his race regarded this other, disinherited from the old world, but confident that he had gained in the New. Nor can I forget the supreme dignity of that old Count as he listened in silence to this judgment of the country and the tradition to which he remained faithful.

II

No one understands Japan: some love her and others hate. Both those who love and hate are sometimes afraid. Merchants who love above all else docility in Orientals hate the assertiveness which the Japanese have learnt from the West.

"I hate the Japanese," said a merchant from the West to me one night, "they are a nasty crowd. Of course you, just a traveller, may like them, but we notice the difference. Twenty years ago we would stand no nonsense from the Japs: we would knock them off the pavement. But now! . . . why now, confound it, they are quite prepared to knock us off."

They had their own way of life once, pretty without profundity; but they have mimicked our way and lost the prettiness, without gaining what we had to give. India forces one to think of life, of God, and of the impenetrableness of existence. China never does that; but you are left thinking how happy and clever men and women can be in poverty conditions, and what a good dinner can come from a very dirty shop. In Japan one despairs of a people who had a technique of life all their own, strange, very different from ours, but complete. They imitated our ways all too successfully, but they have not been happy ways for them. I remember one day seeing a Western-dressed Japanese come with his mud-caked boots on to the clean, neat, matted floor of a Japanese house. Had he kept to his old way, he would have kicked off his wooden clogs outside and entered in his white-stockinged feet, clean amid all the cleanliness. So all Japan, in the chaos of two techniques—the powerful mud-caked boots on the dustless floor—struggles and suffers to-day.

They discovered not a philosophy, not a civilization, but an etiquette. Manners to them are the whole of life. A Japanese statesman tried once to explain to

me the close connection between his own country and China. "We and the Chinese," he said, "have everything in common, religion, culture, chopsticks." Religion and chopsticks were all one and of equal value: you worship as you eat, correctly. I was once taken to the School for the Daughters of Peers in Tokyo, and there etiquette had an importance above all the sciences and all the arts. The mistress of etiquette taught those little Japanese girls how to pass a book, how to pour tea, how to rise and sit down, and the intricate delicacy which surrounded the right way of doing each of those simple things amazed me. One was left wondering if all Japanese life was not organized in this way, until personality had been squeezed out and men and women became as much human automata as dancing geisha-girls.

III

He came on to our train near Nara, and with him his wife and his two little daughters. Undoubtedly he was some one of importance, for a crowd had seen him off, and deep and perpetual had been the obeisances. The train moved on and they all sat opposite me in a row. He wore Western dress, a waisted lounge suit with padded shoulders and brown shoes. She was in a black kimono, the seemly costume of a Japanese wife, while the two little daughters were trussed up like dolls in dresses of flowered silk. I wondered as I watched them how near the life of this Japanese family might be to our own home life in England.

And then things happened. The woman opened a little attaché-case which she had been holding in her hand, and took out a pipe and a pouch and a box of matches. Carefully she filled the pipe and, rising, stepped across to her husband and presented it to him. He had been staring out of the window, and without a word he took the pipe and continued to stare. She next lit a match and held it to the pipe, while he inhaled. Not a word had passed between them.

Again she opened her attaché-case, replaced the pouch and matches, and took out a black kimono and a newspaper. Once more she was standing by her husband; this time she took off his coat, and he stood while she helped him to shuffle into the kimono. It all happened silently, and still in silence he received the newspaper which she offered him as he sank down to his seat again. She took his coat, smoothed out its creases and hung it on a peg in a corner of the carriage, and then she too sat down.

An hour later, as the train drew up to my station, they were still sitting in the same position: not a word had passed between them. Of the man I could see little; an outspread Japanese newspaper with a stream of smoke rising above it marked where he was sitting; the two little daughters still sat like dolls; and as for the woman, she had acted from the moment she entered as one whose duty it is to be dumb.

I wonder if any European has ever learnt the truth of Japanese domesticity: I wonder sometimes if the Japanese know it themselves.

IV

I know nothing of the Japan of romance, the fairy lights, the geisha, and the myriad-coloured kimonos. It is all in the records of romantic fiction for those who wish to believe it, and Lafcadio Hearn once lived in Japan and dreamt that it was true. I wonder if the Lafcadio Hearn who became swallowed up in Japan and reappeared as Yakomo Koizumi ever woke from his dream, but dared not speak of the reality. I set out to dislike the Japanese, and I have grown in some strange way to pity them.

One day, amid the ruins of Yokohama, that city which the earthquake shook to pieces as you might smash a Dresden vase on a paving-stone, I met an old Japanese, a publicist, a grave bearded man, and his plea for his country captured my affections.

"You are still too suspicious of us," he said. "In some ways we have deserved it, but many things have happened," and he pointed to the ruins around him.

"Why did you teach us your way of life if we were not meant to use it? We in Japan are very much like you in England, on a little island, too full of people, and we have to reach out. You blame us when we reach out, but you reached out yourselves.

"Your eyes in England are too much on Europe: this is the place of the future, Japan and China, Manchuria and Mongolia. The Russians see that too: perhaps one day there will be trouble with the Russians. We do not want trouble, though.

"I think sometimes that we can live for a long time without disturbing other people. We are modest, you

know. Have you ever seen a Japanese take a single leafless twig from a tree and place it in a vase in such a way that it decorates a whole room? An American woman would have spent twenty dollars at the florist's and she would have gained more display and less beauty. It is the same with a Japanese farmer. If you can find him two and a half acres of ground which he can till he will provide for himself and his family: he will extract ten times as much from each of those acres as an American farmer could do.

"If only we had a little more land that we could cultivate and a few less hills and mountains. God has been too kind to the Americans and too hard on us. Still, I think we can increase the cultivated area, increase it by a hundred per cent. We shall not have to trouble other nations; at least, not yet.

"Tell them in England, when they think of us here, that they should remember that their own position is still more difficult than ours. We have all this population difficulty, it is true, but it is largely domestic; you have your domestic difficulties and an empire as well. You are the only empire left in Europe. I wonder sometimes how long you will last."

ENCOUNTER XXV

WITH THE TRAVELLING PSYCHO-ANALYST IN AMERICA

I HAD often wondered whether I should meet again that travelling psycho-analyst who had expounded life to me once in the café off the Boulevard Michel-Ange. For a long time I found not even a trace of him, and I was beginning to believe that his plan of travelling the world had been invented merely to round off his conversation. And then suddenly one day we had met in China.

The Chinese had worried him a good deal. He was of opinion that they were sexually phlegmatic, though he was unable to relate this to the flamboyant dragon symbolism which he had found in some of the temples. I had left him one day in Nanking, trying to record, with the aid of an interpreter, the dreams of an old Chinese professor.

The old Chinese had begun, " The other night I saw a thousand vultures . . ."

" Splendid ! Splendid ! " the psycho-analyst had said ; and so I had left them working.

I missed him in Japan, a country which I thought would have yielded him much food for thought, and he was not on the *Tenyo Maru* when I went aboard her at

Yokohama. One night, after Honolulu, as I was dreaming over the memories of my journey, I came to the firm conclusion that I would never see him again. Imagine my surprise when, as I was helping my cabin-boy to get my baggage ready for the customs at San Francisco, he rushed into my cabin and seized me by the arm.

"I must see you at once," he said. "I found out that you were coming from the advance passenger lists. Leave all this kit and come on deck with me. You really can't land in this awful country. My God! I have had a month of it up and down this Californian coast, in the Middle-West and in Chicago, and I'm going back to the Orient just to give my soul a bath and to see a little real civilization again."

I was annoyed. I had always understood that the customs at San Francisco took at least ten hours, and this additional delay seemed so unnecessary.

"This is all very interesting," I replied rather feebly, "but can you tell me what it has to do with me? Once I am through the customs and in the *St. Francis*, and have had a shower and some food, I shall be delighted to listen to you."

"But the whole point is, don't land. This country is just awful. I've come here to warn you. Go straight from this boat to the *President Lincoln*, which is sailing to-morrow. Don't set foot in this country!"

"But America, above all places, is the country I want to see," I said.

"Oh, Lord! I suppose you must," he replied. "Well, at least let me tell you what you are in for. It's all hypocrisy, this American life, from beginning to end. Do you know that if Adam and Eve had been

Americans they would never have plucked the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge? They would have invented some appliance to suck out the fruit-juice and leave the apple still standing. Get the fun and save the appearance! And, Lord! If Adam's wife had been an American woman she would probably have been able to prove to God at the end of it all that they were still in the State of Innocence."

"But look at what they have achieved in a brief hundred years," I said.

"Why," he replied, "you talk as if you were an American yourself. Any fool can build up a material civilization, and they had every natural resource crowded into the country to help them. This place just begged to be developed, and the American, in a lazy, muddled sort of way, decided to do it. But they have done nothing else. They don't think; they don't feel; they don't live. Ugh! Barbarians! All of them!

"It's one of the tragedies of the modern world that we have hoped so much from America. In Europe, and in the Orient, we looked to her for some finer conception of internationalism and morality. It was pathetic to see how the Chinese believed in that, and America seems to be merely a mixture of graft, unctuous morality, and vulgarity. I suppose you are one of those guys who believe in saving the world through Anglo-American friendship."

"I certainly do believe," I replied, "that Anglo-American friendship is the most important thing in the world to-day. If we can't have that I think there is small hope for any of us."

He laughed.

"My poor old man. You are in for some unpleasant disappointments. I was in this country on the Fourth of July, when they had their Defence Day. For militaristic spirit it would compare with anything in pre-war Germany. All able-bodied men marched up Main Street and, to the accompaniment of much music, signed a promise to defend their country whenever there was need. There were plenty of speeches, too, about showing the cold steel to cool the hot blood of Japan. Poor Japan! I always think of the Japanese-American situation as a very big man with a very big hammer trying to hit a very small nail."

"But," I said, "I suppose America has the right to defend herself?"

"Oh, defend fiddlesticks! What has she to defend herself against? It is just a show of militarism; the afterwash of the war in the blood of a conceited people who never felt the real terrors of war. They would love to fight something, to worry it and be cruel to it, like a cat with a mouse. They love, these unctuous Americans, to sentimentalize over the awfulness of Chinese cruelty. The cruelty in this country appalled me more than anything I have seen anywhere else. It comes into their Labour disputes. I met a Labour leader at Los Angeles, and he had a deep cut at the back of his head, the bone of his nose broken, and the mark of brass 'knuckles' on the throat. All those wounds had been inflicted by 'thugs' employed by the masters in some Labour dispute. It's the method all over the country.

"The Press panders to the cruelty. They lynched a negro down in Missouri a few days ago, and, do you know, the camera-man took a 'close-up' of the death

agonies of the poor brute and the papers all over the country published them. No wonder they get crime in this country, because in practical affairs there is no moral law, not even a conception of what morality means. In 1924 they managed to have eleven thousand murders."

At this moment a porter who had been standing by our side broke in desperately to tell me that my luggage was assembled on the quay, and I turned to the psycho-analyst and pleaded with him that I might hear the rest of his woes in the *St. Francis*.

"No," he said, "I came here to do a moral duty, and I must get it off my chest before you go. These people are a sham, and you must know it. It's their sham Puritanism that's at the bottom of it. You can't imagine how narrow some of the little home-towns are. I met a school teacher from a school in Kansas who had been dismissed because the clergyman found a copy of De Maupassant in her rooms. It was in Kansas, too, that during a religious revival the teachers complained that children who spent all their energies singing hymns every night couldn't do any useful school work the next morning. There was a terrible fracas and many dismissals. One teacher, wiser in his day than the others, saw his opportunity. He drilled his boys to shout all together:

'I love Jesus!
I love Jesus!
I love Jesus!
Hoo! Hoo! Hoo!
I hate Satan!
I hate Satan!
I hate Satan!
Hoo! Hoo! Hoo!'

This made such an impression on the religious fathers that he was given a headship.

" In America there is no mean between the narrowest religious Puritanism of that type and outrageous licence. Take, for instance, the question of drink. I am beginning to think that the Americans did right to institute Prohibition—not because drinking is wrong, but because of the way Americans drank. If you wish to see Americans drink, go down to Tua Juana, in Mexico, just over the South Californian border. You will see them gulp down gin and whisky, not for the sake of good talk and conviviality, as we do in England, but just in order that they may get drunk.

" It's the same with the younger generation in this country : they either keep to the absurd old traditions of small-town Puritanism or they throw all standards to the winds. The language and ideas of co-educational sophomores in America is licensed enough to make even a psycho-analyst blush. The important thing is, that while the old Puritanism is still apparently strong, it is in reality declining. The people who practise it have grown tired of it. I remember that on a train in South California I sat opposite to a woman who made her child read the New Testament all the morning, while she read *Snappy Stories* herself. You can symbolize them from that : a nation reading *Snappy Stories* in a book bound like the Bible.

" Although the old Puritanism is dead as a religion it has left its influences behind. To the old people Puritanism incorporated the ideas of thrift, of getting on, and the moral desirability of wealth. Music, beauty and the arts were all crushed out, as the entice-

ments of the devil to seduce one from the God-like world of 'getting on.' Americans have retained the lesson of getting on, but they have forgotten they were supposed to be doing it for the glory of God. The worship of the dollar is the logical conclusion of Puritan ethics in America. In San Francisco I went on a 'rubber-neck' expedition round the town. Every time we passed a church the man with the megaphone would shout out: 'Baptist church. Cost $300,000 to build. That's where all the millionaires go. On your left Christian Science church. Cost $333,000 to build. Across the road a Methodist church. Erected at a cost of $400,000.' There was no mention of art, or beauty, or worship, except this perpetual worship of wealth which Puritanism, with its contempt for intellect and the æsthetic and its worship of practical success, has brought in."

"But family life is very decent and healthy in this country, isn't it?"

"Oh, Lord! What foolishnesses one has to answer. I remember one day going into a little Middle-West café. Everything inside looked spotlessly clean, a tribute to the great American achievements of plumbing and hygiene. One of our party, for some reason or another, asked to see the basement, and we were shown to a dirty subterranean cavern where food and bad drainage mingled in a nauseating confusion. There's another symbol of American life, the land where appearances, and nothing but appearances, are sound. It is like American women, 'cosmeticized' into beauty. Where American life is moral, it is moral because they do not dare. They hire out

European novelists who are credibly supposed to be Bohemian to come over here and talk to them. In that way they get a little salacious excitement imaginatively because they haven't the courage to get it in any other way. And the dullness of the American home! The American husband has no more conception of how to make love than a pig. He comes home at night, throws a box of candies to his wife and says, 'There you are, honey. Be a good girl.' Then out he goes to his club to talk dollars and play poker until bedtime.

"Love! They don't understand what it means in this country. Just as they drink without exuberance, they love without a conception of beauty. The crudity of the treatment of love in an American Vaudeville would make even the chorus of the Folies Bergères blush. Lord! To think how they love and beget their kind in those dull, beautiless Puritan homes. Then there are the bathing-girl competitions which culminate in a national show at Atlantic City. It is supposed to be organized to find the national beauty, but really it is just an excuse for fat old men to pat presentable young women and pretend that they are doing it for the sake of national health."

"What of their complexes?" I asked.

"Complexes! Why, they talk about them all day, but they haven't the least conception of what the word means."

With that he despaired of me; and I left him to go down the gangway and enter the country which he had so abused.

ENCOUNTER XXVI

WITH THE SELLER OF ALL THINGS [1]

IT could have happened only in America, and he who despises it is a fool.

Somewhere in Minnesota there was once a stationmaster who rose regularly, checked consignments and gave out tickets from ten to six, and as regularly went home to bed. As there were only two trains a day, life was not very over-crowded, and sometimes he would dream that there was more in the world than the two lines of metal which stretched away out of sight on each side of the station : but it was only a dream. There came one day a shipment of watches into that station, and the tradesman for whom they were intended declared rather forcibly that he had never ordered them. So the stationmaster in Minnesota took out a label and wrote " Return to Chicago," and then put down his pen and thought. He went out and walked up and down the platform, looking at those double lines of metals that stretched away, it might be to the end of the world, and he came into his office again and tore up the label.

And he began to sell those watches by writing letters

[1] This Encounter is based on a visit to Sears Roebuck.

to people whom he thought might want them, and so quickly did they disappear that soon he was writing to Chicago for more.

* * * * *

That was the beginning : it was the end I saw : the mammoth in Chicago, created by this man and his associates, which belches forth its goods all over the Continent. Ask it for anything, from a safety-pin to a steam-crane, and within twenty-four hours it will have found it. It is the Santa Claus of America : every day over one hundred thousand people post little brown slips saying what they wish, and every day those hundred thousand wishes come to rest within this gigantic beast. Eight million people wish something every year, and this great giant of good-will never fails them.

I stood within the giant and saw the moving belts which carried parcel after parcel, all shapes and sizes, to the central spiral chute, through which they hurtled and slipped down into the packing-house, where a thousand servants of the giant were ready to receive them. Six long pipe-shaped packages came sliding along the belt : they were carpets. I suppose it must have been that memory of carpets which sent my mind back to the East, where men buy and sell in a different way.

I remembered one morning in the Mouski—Cairo's native bazaar—when I had spent quite two hours trying to arrange a price for a very ordinary little rug. Old Abdul, the dealer, had started bidding at three times the price he hoped to get and tried most graciously to gull me. We sat on the floor while Abdul

supplied amber cigarettes and mint tea, and we talked and talked. Abdul and his ways were gone. In America he would be floating down that moving belt to be shot into the great chute and so go his way to extinction.

I missed Abdul—his turban and flowing yellow robes and his half-yard of white beard, and all the intricate perfumes of the little multi-coloured shed which he called his shop. How did one trade with this mammoth? You wrote what you wanted—all prices fixed—on the brown order forms and waited until the god of all merchandise shot forth your requirements; and, god-like, this giant was never late nor wrong nor deceptive. But to try and see the presiding deity himself would be as absurd as to seek the living image of Apollo in his oracle at Delphi.

Yet this is greater than Abdul, a symbol, perhaps, of the best that the West can produce. Eight million people every year trust the honesty of this giant, and not one of them is deceived: it is that conception of the necessity of a minimum of honesty that has made our Western civilization possible. Had India but that idea of honesty, her three hundred million peasants would not be so near the poverty line as they are to-day. Had China that honesty, she would long ago have outstripped the West in the game of production. The East is amorphous, for each man seeks for himself and his family: we in the West are agglutinative, for we have learnt the wisdom of sinking a little of our selfishness in our will to co-operate. Strange though it may seem, and by very devious ways, it is the ethic

of Christianity that has made possible this Mammoth of Distribution.

I watched within the mammoth men packing saucepans and loading them on the moving belt! All day they laboured, ever packing, and always saucepans, and again I thought of Abdul. Bartering was for Abdul a game which contained the whole cycle of the passions, anger and jealousy and love; but the giant had converted men into talons and denied them a voice or a thought. It was then that the elevator-man, the meanest of the servants, asked me if I would like to see a higher floor, and when we were both inside his machine he spoke to me. He had just come back from his vacation. I asked him where he had been. Surely this automaton would not venture far out of Chicago—perhaps as far as Milwaukee, up Lake Michigan and back, but no more. He replied quickly that he had motored out to the Coast, and that his wife and children had been with him. He told me of the sights and people he had seen, the strangeness of different scenes in that three-thousand-mile journey to the Pacific Coast and back.

The god of distribution was kind, then, even to the meanest of its servants. Who was I to say what treasures might lie in the minds of the saucepan packers whom I had pitied? And who was Abdul that I should compare him with these men: Abdul, who had blinked in the sun at twelve yards of bazaar street ever since he was ten years of age?

I left this shrine in which all things are sold with much respect for the deity and something of shame that so often I had abused the civilization which had

created it. Its very immensity had conquered me, and I worshipped its strength. Perhaps one day there will be a mammoth so great that this giant will seem no larger than Abdul's bazaar store in the Mouski. From over the world the sons of men will send their little brown slips, and the Grand Mammoth of Distribution will send to all men what they desire. And that will be the sum of their toil. They shall not sow, nor shall they reap, nor shall they labour. All they shall do is to write out little brown slips and wait. But say one day the mammoth should cease to send!

This could have happened only in America, and he who despises it is a fool.

ENCOUNTER XXVII

WITH CHICAGO

YOU are a deformity : half of you is like an ugly, powerful hag, yet some of your limbs are fashioned in beauty like those of a young goddess.

One day you will be the greatest city in the world ; all your citizens tell me that. Will you then seem the Sodomish, paradisaical place of power which you are now ?

Every day one man falls dead in your streets by the crime of your citizens. You do not care—indifferent mother of your children.

You have places of learning fashioned like those of the old world, with many thousands following Truth within their walls. While they are listening to the words of Plato and Sophocles a negro near by is plunging a knife into the necks of swine.

You have beautiful homes, built like the old houses of England, with gardens full of roses and of clinging plants ; but a few miles away the air is heavy with the slaughter of the animals which you have killed in one day.

You breed the kindest men upon earth, but they are few and they dwell apart, and will not look upon your ugliness. Many are the foul ones you procreate who exult in your foulness.

You have night clubs in which men are not wicked, and churches in which they are.

You love music, and you would cultivate the arts; but could Apollo and Pan dwell within your Blackstones, even if you should show them to the best suite of rooms?

You are beautiful at night, when your sins are hidden and your sounds hushed. Your mighty buildings—the sepulchres of your prosperity—stand up in their radiant mightiness and shine out in light.

All tongues are within you; all peoples dwell in your endless streets. They struggle, and know not tenderness.

You have the ugliest name of all the cities of the earth. I abuse you, and yet in my heart I love you and would see you again.

Are you more wicked than other cities, or is it your very mightiness that breeds and multiplies your crimes?

How I hated your power! But it has subdued me: I reverence it as one might the strength of a tyrant whose smallest gesture can strike death.

New York will one day be as a child by your side, whom you will lead where you will. New York grows sleek while you grow mighty.

Yet why should I abuse you, for are you not the entrails of this continent, and the entrails of the earth?

If your city is heavy with the smoke of slaughtered animals, do I not eat of the flesh that you slaughter? That negro who is for ever swinging his knife at the necks of swine, does he not feed those who condemn you?

You are the mother of cities : you give your breast to those who starve. Yet grow not wanton, O mother, nor proud ; for the world and its treasures are for your garnering, and the prosperity of nations is in your hands.

ENCOUNTER XXVIII

WITH THE MORMONS AT SALT LAKE CITY

I MET him in a little American hotel in Salt Lake City : he was the elevator man. I took to that elevator because it moved nearly as slowly as a lift does in England. Americans delight in rapid motion ; indeed, there is a vaudeville joke in America that only the leisured classes have time to use the lift in England because it is so slow. But I loved that leisurely lift, and I grew to love the small wrinkled man who worked it.

One burning July night, when I returned to a deserted lounge at ten o'clock, I felt something of the spirit of the great democracy which I was visiting, and I asked him to share an orangeade with me before I was hauled up to my room on the fourth floor. All day I had been moving through Salt Lake City, seeing the holy places of the Mormons and the setting of their town. I had come from California across the great American deserts, flat alkaline plains through which you travel for days without seeing anything but grey-green sage-bush ; and my first sight of Salt Lake had been one of memorable beauty. The Salt Lake itself lay as a large stretch of inland water, burning in the evening sun ;

behind it stood the city with its massive buildings, and as a background to it all the copper-coloured hills looked down upon the town.

In the streets I had met kindly, mild-mannered people, a complete and rather pleasant contrast to the bustling Californian of Los Angeles. Wide, clean roads led to the central group of Mormon buildings, which have a peculiar grace and beauty of architecture: the central structure, the Temple, can possibly challenge comparison with any holy edifice in the States. Surrounded by green quadrangles, it rises a slim but compact mass of grey granite, an achievement of symmetrical charm. Yet it was constructed by early pioneers who had to drag each of its great granite blocks in their ox-waggons from the quarries many miles away.

The sight of all these things had aroused my interest in the man who built them and in the creeds he held. All one's preconceptions were somehow utterly askew. I had expected, I do not know why, to find a city decked with all the voluptuous display of the Bagdad of popular fiction; and yet, here was a quiet Puritan town, with sober, decent-minded people. Perhaps the wrinkled little lift-man would enlighten me.

He sipped his orangeade and led the conversation with an eager cross-examination.

"You're an Englishman. . . . Do you know Hampshire?" Yes, I knew Hampshire.

"Ever been to Romsey?" Yes, I had been to Romsey.

"Do you know the D'Arlingtons?" No, I had not that pleasure.

"Big people, the D'Arlingtons." He leant for-

ward confidentially. "I am told they go back right to Norman times. I am one of the American branch. We have dropped the 'd,' but we are the same family. You will find lots of tombstones of our family in village churches round about Romsey."

For some time we discussed the glories of England's ancient families, glories of which he, and not I, could boast, and I ended by promising to look for the D'Arlington graves next time I visited Hampshire.

"And now," I said, in the first pause in our talk, "tell me about these Mormons. They interest me."

"I don't hold with them," he said, "and yet most of what you hear of them is wrong and unfair. It began in the 'twenties of the last century with Joseph Smith. He was a wild fellow, given to drinking, and yet very religious, as some of those high-drinking fellows are. One day an angel of God appeared to Joseph and gave him plates of gold, written all over with strange characters. Joseph said the characters were of a language called 'reformed Egyptian,' but later the angel supplied him with a pair of spiritual spectacles, and he was able to read the inscriptions and publish them. It all sounds very much like Moses and the tablets, doesn't it?

"The book which Joseph made out of these inscriptions he called 'The Book of Mormon,' and he and those that held with him added it as an extra book to the Bible. You can buy a copy for fifty cents up at the Temple yonder. It is a strange story that the book tells. According to Joseph, or the angel—whichever way you look at it—some of the Tribes of Israel wandered from Palestine to America, and their

descendants are the present American Indians. That's one reason why the Indians here like the Mormons better than any of the rest of us.

" I doubt whether anyone would have worried much about Joseph. He was a wild fellow, and there were plenty like him in the 'twenties ; but he was not the man to keep the crowd with him once he had drawn them together. This Mormonism business would have faded out in a year or two if it had been just Joseph Smith's affair. But Joseph had the good luck to meet a young New Englander of quite a different type—Brigham Young. Young didn't drink and he didn't see angels ; but he knew what he wanted, and he usually got it. Mormonism was really made on the day that Young joined the ranks of Joseph.

" Of course, you are beginning to wonder where the double-marriage part comes in. Well, it's coming right now. Joseph became very proud of the show he had made as a religious leader, but he felt that he could become still more powerful if only he could imitate the ways of the patriarchs in the Bible. Of course, the patriarchs took to themselves more than one wife, and so Joseph decided to follow their example. And he began to teach his followers. Even Christ, he said, had never definitely spoken up for monogamy, nor had He condemned Abraham and Isaac and the others. Joseph even went on to say that perhaps polygamy was one of those things the evangelist admitted he had no time to mention when he said that he had many more things that might have been told. There are more meanings to the Bible, you know, than we simple folks imagine. Joseph found

this strange one for himself. Brigham Young took to the patriarchal view of marriage with greater energy than anyone else: before the end of his days this super-Mormon had had twenty-seven wives. He had a family, you know, of fifty-six children—thirty-one daughters and twenty-five sons.

"Once the news got abroad of these new habits in the Mormon homes there was trouble. All the Christian Churches condemned them, and in the 'twenties men were apt to be rough with the things they condemned. They tarred and feathered Joseph once, and they were always putting him in prison. At last, one night, in the gaol over in Illinois, the mob got at him and put a round of shot through him. That was the end of Joseph with his tablets and his mysteries: they will still speak of him, here in Utah, as the martyr.

"When Joseph was killed, Brigham Young became leader of the Mormons. He told them that they must trek out West farther than anyone had yet gone, and that he would lead them. Mind you, I don't hold with these Mormons, but they can make a fine tale of it when they tell you of that march West. They felt as if they were the Children of Israel journeying into the Promised Land. Whatever may be said about that, they certainly met plenty of trouble on the way. Many a time Indians attacked them, and when it wasn't Indians it was buffaloes. More than once they had to flee from prairie fires. On the whole, they seem to have grumbled less than the Children of Israel; men and women alike, they just plodded on and did what Young told them to do.

"At last they came to Salt Lake, and a mighty

uninviting place it was in those days—just a desert with a big salt lake full of heavy, useless waters. But Brigham Young told them that Salt Lake was their promised land, and they believed him. They set to work, planted a crop, and waited for the harvest. That first winter must have been the worst of all : you will find the story carved out on the panels of the Sea-gull Monument up at the Temple. They say it was all a miracle, and whatever may be said about that, it certainly was very strange. For when that crop was ready for harvest, swarms of crickets came and began to eat it up. The whole body of settlers went out with pickaxes and hoes to try and drive them off, but there were too many for them. At last they felt that the game was over, and in the heat of the day they lay down with just one thought before them—starvation.

"Then what these Mormon folk call the miracle happened, and that's the reason why they have the Sea-gull Monument up yonder. Just as the crickets were getting their teeth into that corn, crowds of white sea-gulls flew up, as if from nowhere, and began eating the crickets. Once they had had a good meal of crickets they were sick and started again, and so it went on until those crickets were all gone. Now, what are you to make of that story, sir ? Was it a miracle like those genuine old Hebrew miracles in the Bible ? "

I had to confess that I was no hand at miracles.

"But tell me," I said, "do they still practise polygamy here ? " The little elevator man looked at me slyly.

"Well," he said, "I don't know. Of course, in a general way they don't. The Edmunds Act forty

years ago put an end to most of it. You see, the Edmunds Act made this plural marriage business illegal in every State in the Federation. It put the Mormons in a difficult position. For sixty years they had been saying that plural marriage was the law of God and the beginning of their spiritual life, and now a United States law told them that they must stop it or clear out. It was a pretty fix; but they decided that it was safer to obey the United States law than what they thought to be God's law. So they stopped it; at least, most of them did. But I think some of the old ones "—he lowered his voice to a whisper—" some of the old ones still go on in the old way."

He paused and took out a packet of chewing tobacco: a habit developed, I presume, solely by the American branch of the D'Arlington family. I took it that his story was over.

As we crawled up in the lift he gave me a few afterthoughts.

" Strict people; no tea or coffee; never any strong drink; always were ' drys '; Puritan folk, yet they carry on like this; beats me—it always did. Here we are at the fourth floor You will look up those tombstones by Romsey? Thank you, sir; good night to you."

And I went to my room, thinking of this strange bypath in the history of faiths—this pale, mild-mannered people, who could build a magnificent temple and statuary that was not mean, who drank neither tea nor coffee because such stimulants were evil, and who offended the moral conscience of the Western world by their attitude to the institution of marriage.

ENCOUNTER XXIX

WITH HOLLYWOOD

I

CELLULOIDA, as the pert American Press calls it, is the holy city of the movies. In its studios, which are guarded from the public with more care than the palaces of viceroys, films are produced with tribulation and anguish. The birth of a new film is conducted with more elaborate care than that of a millionaire baby. For months the studios will be closed to the public, and the "stars" will refuse to see anyone from the outside world. Within, all is a confusion of sets and offices and camera-houses, where camera-men and stars and art-directors mingle in work and jealousy and intrigue. Nor when the film is completed does the elaborate ritual end : the film is conveyed with a fine ceremonial to Grauman's *Egyptian*, the High Temple of the Film World.

Dim, orange-tinted lights glow in the ceiling of the vast emporium and cast a religious glimmer on the sapphire-blue walls. The attendants are all slim girls, who hope one day to be movie stars ; their quasi-Oriental costumes are in harmony with the general decorative scheme. Gradually the hour draws near for the new-born film to be shown to the waiting

world. Already the building is crowded with Hollywood's stars, some of them wealthy as princes. There is no go-and-come-as-you-please atmosphere about Grauman's *Egyptian.* The fashionable crowd is prepared to be in its seat—for which it has paid more than at a West End theatre—for half an hour before the starting hour. At last the lights lower: the orange and sapphire tints deepen into darkness. The title of a new piece stands in its stark whiteness on the screen—a film has been launched into the world.

II

It was in 1893 that the audience of Chicago's World Fair watched blurred pictures jerking on a "magic lantern screen." That audience probably went home puzzled and amused. It could little guess, as it watched Edison's Kinetoscope, that after thirty years fifteen thousand machines would be showing life-like moving pictures to fifteen million men and women in the United States alone, while throughout the world indefinite millions would be similarly amused. One looks at the high, forbidding walls of Hollywood's studios. Behind them a medium of expression is being prepared which is more widely diffused than any other in the whole world. Even the Catholic Church cannot claim as many adherents in the different countries of the world as does this worship of the film.

In a vulgar way Hollywood is conscious of its power, but it never stops to think what effect, moral or artistic, its production may have upon the world. It

believes that its function under the Immanent Will is to produce, and it finds blind production a highly lucrative occupation.

III

A casting-room in a Hollywood studio. American girls from every State in the Union, athletic-looking young men, dark Spanish girls from Mexico, attracted to Hollywood by the recent filming of Don Juan, and a few of those beautiful Russian women whom one finds in so many parts of the world, in every possible employment. Here is the raw material of the world's most popular institution. And who are the heads of the profession? A knock-about comedian from a London music-hall and a little Canadian character actress from a touring company.

The choosing of a cast is a bewildering process. The questions to the athletic young man seem more or less of a type.

"Can you drive a car?"

"Yep."

"Could you do seventy?"

"Yep!"

"Could you drive a loco.?"

"Yep!"

"Used to horses?"

"I was on a cattle-ranch for three years."

"Well, I'll try you on one of our bucking animals."

"Say, boss, that'a stiff trial to begin with."

"Oh, if you run away from that we have no use for you. Next, please."

The next happens to be a negress, who, as a matter

of fact, has been dismissed from six situations in nine months for laziness and dishonesty.

"Massa, I make good picture for movie. I good girl!"

"Let's have a look at your face. Yes, it's ugly enough. Let's see what your height is."

"I nice tall girl, massa."

"We want you short, not tall. But you're short enough. Do you mind being kicked and thrown about?"

"You wouldn't be rough with me, massa?"

"No, we'll treat you gentle. I'll give you a trial."

Two rows of ivory-white teeth beamed upon the world to announce her success.

All day and every day it goes on, not without an element of bribery and corruption. More hearts are broken here and more ambitions thwarted than in any other set of rooms in America.

IV

It is the studio café at lunch time. The system of feeding is that of the barbarous cafetaria, of which Americans seem so fond. You take your place at the end of a queue by a long counter, and seize a tray and a knife and fork. The edibles are all displayed for you, like goods at a Woolworth's store, and you grab what you want. There is no turning back, and there is no second chance. At the end, when you have picked your assortment, you pass a pay-desk and make your way to a table where you can spread out your choice. You usually find that you have forgotten to get butter or a sweet, or you have chosen twice as

much food as you can eat and have to leave it on the tray behind you. It is the negation of civilized eating : it is the end of the art of the cuisine.

Some two or three hundred actors and actresses were snatching a hasty midday meal in this way. At my table were three men in cowboy dress and a lady in riding habit, who on the screen is known as " Bess of the West Country." As far as I could gather, Bess was preparing a play in which she was to be captured by Dark David, and later, of course, rescued by the right young man. Dark David is certainly an unpleasant character, with a scar (made of black paint) across his right cheek. At the moment he and Bess are eating vegetable salads and chatting away as if they were the best friends in the world.

At a table near by is an old lady with her husband : they have come straight from a Victorian scene. She is wearing a crinoline, and her grey hair is curled about her head. Her husband, devoid of coat and waistcoat on account of the heat, is airing himself in a beautiful white starched shirt. In between them, and smoking a Camel cigarette as he eats, is a courtier of the Louis-Quatorze period. It looks as if this were some subsection of the Day of Judgment, with types of all the ages represented.

V

After lunch a diminutive American boy, who had been set aside as my cicerone, approached me.

" Say ! " he said, " they are going to ' shoot ' Bess riding a bucking horse this afternoon. Maybe you would like to see that ? "

It seemed potentially amusing, so my cicerone and I were driven in an old "Dodge" to a field in a corner of the studio, reserved for Wild West shows. And there we waited. I have since discovered that the main quality essential to success in the cinema world is the power to wait: you wait for producers who are talking with managers, for camera-men who have forgotten something, for the sun to come out or the wind to stop blowing; and finally, and most of all, you wait for leading ladies who, growing tired of waiting, have disappeared. For half an afternoon we waited. The producer bit the ends off large cigars, and spat, and talked affectionately to Dark David's sister; the supernumeraries, gathered in one disconsolate group, sat and stared at the grass like cows. I do not know what we were waiting for: I doubt if anyone else did. Finally a small, fat Jew drove up in a neat limousine. Perhaps we were waiting for him. . . . No, he was merely a friend of Bess, and she asked him for a cigarette and took a seat in the car behind him and continued to wait.

At last the camera-men adjusted the cowboys to their satisfaction and "shot" them while they spoke darkly to one another. Very dull, all of it, and no bucking horse yet in sight. This done, the cowboys returned to their disconsolate group, and sat again staring at the grass.

The producer bit the end off another cigar, and said:

"Here he comes."

Along the dusty road which led to the corner of the studio came the bucking horse, as calmly as a

London cart-horse after a long day on the streets. The moment was evidently approaching. The producer came to the limousine where Bess was still talking to her fat little Jew friend.

"Bess, do you feel like riding the bucking horse this afternoon?"

"No, honey. I'll leave it to one of the boys."

The producer made no comment, but took out his chewed cigar and spat again. He called to one of the "boys," who disappeared into a shanty near by. We waited again. Thirty minutes later the "boy" reappeared in flaxen hair and riding kit, the double of Bess.

"Will he do?" the producer asked Bess. She got out of the limousine and looked at her double. She trimmed his hair a little and altered the angle of his hat.

"I never did meet a man that knew how to put on a hat," she mumbled. "Yes, he'll do now, boss."

The double mounted the "bucking horse," which certainly did oblige with one or two bucks. The camera-men stood by their machines and began to turn the little handles: for one brief moment the double, looking the very image of Bess, galloped from one side of the field to another. It must have lasted two minutes, not more. The handles stopped turning; the double dismounted. Bess entered the limousine again.

"Say, we've finished for to-day," she said, addressing no one in particular. "Drive on, Joe," she added to the little Jew at the steering-wheel.

My diminutive cicerone looked up at me with something of disgust on his face.

" Perhaps we'd better be getting," he said.

VI

All Hollywood is not like that. Men work harder and risk more in some quarters of this Celluloida than anywhere else in the world. One day I met a camera-director, an Englishman, who worked harder than most men I know, and who regarded his work as an art. He had left England in the days when films were still being shown for twopence in any vacant broken-down hall. He had tried his luck in California; he had won through. He loved a blank spool of film as a painter may love his canvas. One afternoon, as he was waiting for some principals to arrange themselves in a " set," he explained to me something of his part in this game of amusing the public.

" The artist behind a camera does get his chance in this film business," he said. " Two men may require a road for their setting in a film. One man will go out and photograph a road, any road. Another man will go out to that same road, but he will make just a few changes: in one place he will spill some water, and in another place take down a tree, and he will finish by photographing, not just a road, but something of pictorial beauty.

" In the old days no one distinguished between the stage and the film, and no one worried very much about plot at all. A film play was just a series of funny or exciting gags; form, in the literary sense, did not exist. Whenever we took a group, it had to

be arranged like a stage group, with the 'star' in the middle instead of the actor-manager, and the rest in an admiring half-circle round him. In those days, too, the 'stars' had to direct everything, and the camera-man was there just to turn the handle when he was told. All that has disappeared now. The big people realize that moving pictures are in reality *pictures*, and that they must be composed and arranged by the man behind the camera.

"And there is colour-photography. It is a practical proposition now. Think how magnificent it will be to have natural colours on the film—I say 'natural colours' advisedly, for we have tried in the old days to daub films with colour, and we have rejected it. Some people despise the film as art, but they are wrong—hopelessly wrong; why—I'm sorry, but they're ready for me. I'd like another talk later."

But I never saw him again.

ENCOUNTER XXX

WITH A FILM STAR

IT is certainly more difficult to see one of Hollywood's "stars" than any Eastern potentate. To gain audience with Zaghlul Pasha one must be content to drink innumerable Persian coffees with his innumerable relations; but to penetrate to a kinema "star" one must pierce concentric lines of underlings, all jealous of their power and afraid that the intruder may disturb their prestige with the "chief." The intrigues of Hollywood are surely more complex than those of an Oriental court. One began to despair in the midst of the complexities of Hollywood's jealousy. "Why worry?" I thought. "Why worry to see these people at all?"

And yet they were worth worrying about; their influence wandered up and down the world more widely and diversely than that of any other group of contemporary personalities. If they had faiths they could propagate them. Their faces were as familiar to Egyptian *fellahin* and Indian *babus* as to the cockney clerk and his sweetheart who meander on a Saturday night into the Tivoli. Some day, one felt, a Shakespeare might come to Hollywood, as he had come among the popular pleasure haunts of Eliza-

bethan London, and turn this film into a great artistic medium. Some one may come, who can tell ? Yes, they were worth seeing, if only they would allow themselves to be seen.

I waited and looked out across the studio : it might have been a mediæval courtyard filled with the retainers of a baron. How many myrmidons these film barons did keep : Press agents hurrying to arrange interviews ; camera-men rushing their machines in Ford cars from one " set " to another ; actors and actresses in Spanish costume waiting for their next " turn," and innumerable people whose occupation I cannot possibly imagine, who yet looked very important and essential as they pushed their way about.

Nor was it only these retainers within the studio who depended on the patronage of this single man : there were renters, builders, the makers of plush tip-up chairs and of screens and machines, commissionaires, and thousands of girl attendants. Yes, a film " star " was a phenomenon of some magnitude in the economic life of humanity. So I found consolation in waiting ; and continued to wait.

Suddenly he came. It was rather like the effect one gets when a royal personage, for whose appearance one has stood watching in a crowd for hours, at last condescends to pass by. The Ford car swung in by the studio gates at an incredible speed and swerved round by the veranda.

" That's Fairbanks," said a camera-man by my side, in an awed voice ; and I realized that at last he had come.

One knows the Mr. Fairbanks of the films, who enters an inn by jumping down from the roof, kills four armed enemies with his bare fists, catches up the heroine, and is out and away before anyone has realized the cause of the intrusion. He is very much like that in daily life. He strode up and down the terrace outside his studio office at a speed which I personally use only when trying to catch a train. Near by were two wooden horses, over which he leaps in order to keep fit, and lying in the corner was an enormous whip for his arm exercises. He talked with as much zest as he moved. First, about the film.

"A film play," he said, "must have the simplest of outlines. Modern literature is full of complications, many of them absurd complications. The film is a corrective to all that. The vague, the abnormal, disappear, and you are back with the healthy straightforward story of incident. A good film is like a grammatical sentence: it will have a subject, a predicate, and an object, or in more technical terms, presentation, development and climax. Let me give an instance. I took as a formula for a film of mine, *The Thief of Bagdad*, the simple sentence, Youth Gains Happiness. Once I had that sentence the execution of the film was comparatively easy. I had to devise a number of captions to qualify the youth; a larger number to show him gaining something; and then, with rapidity at the close, to show his happiness.

"One of the glories, and at the same time one of the difficulties, of the film lies in the very varied audience to which we appeal. How many themes are there

which will appeal to old and young alike, and in a dozen different countries in the world ?

" And remember, as far as film work is concerned we are still in our infancy. Some genius of the film will come one day and make us realize how infantile all our efforts have been. Chaplin is the only man approaching genius in this business. He is content to show us a single pathetic little man struggling with the immense forces of nature, which are threatening every moment to overwhelm him. For myself, I am content with a simple story which any boy could understand. But I do not see why the film should not become supremely the artistic medium of motion in such a way that it transcends the human values we now portray, for motion I believe to be the quality common to all life. I do not know : it may be ; but for the moment I am content with the simple things I know I can do.

" For myself, I have always had a philosophy of life, and though I never make a conscious effort to put that philosophy into my plays, I feel that it enters into them all the same. I believe in a balance in life : we must find that balance for ourselves and aim at maintaining it. One gets that balance by action in all sections of life. Above all, I believe that plenty of physical action is essential for a healthy life, and that, at least, I try to show in my films. Along with that right physical action there must be right mental action, and right emotional action. One must try to understand oneself and then aim at activity and balance in these things. It's difficult, but I think it can be done. I come back to the idea of motion,

which I believe to be the primary idea in life : one must get right motion in all departments of life in order to be in harmony with things."

" But have you no ambition to be an actor on what we used to call the legitimate stage ? " I asked.

" There are some parts which would amuse me, particularly some of Shakespeare's parts. I should like to play Mercutio and do that

> ' O calm, dishonourable, vile submission
> Alla stoccata carries it away.'

But really I have no ambitions in that direction. This is so much bigger : it's a greater thing altogether."

All this he said, but no more. I asked him of the effect of his profession on the world at large, and especially on the Orient. Of this he would not speak, although he mentioned with a smile an incredibly large sum as his annual royalties from film rights in China.

" I do my best," he added ; and he left it at that.

ENCOUNTER XXXI

WITH THE MAN WHO HATED ENGLAND

I MET him one summer evening on a Pullman dining-car as we were tearing through Kansas cornfields. A perspiring negro waiter was refilling our glasses with iced water, and he splashed the man opposite me. He took it all more kindly than I had expected and I noticed him closely. Soon we were talking. We talked of idle unessentials at first, and then suddenly he said:

"You are English?"

"Yes," I said; "but how did you know?"

"Oh! it's your clothes and your voice. We Americans have a smarter cut than you, and we speak more clearly. Mind you, though, I was an Englishman myself once"—he paused—"I'm an American citizen now."

"Do you often go back to England?"

"Sometimes, but not often. I have my old people to look up. They are muddling along, just as they did twenty years ago, in a tenement at Bermondsey. I've tried to get them out of it, but they love the mess and the muddle. You're mediæval in Europe; the whole lot of you. There's no move in you at all.

" Yes, twenty years ago I came out steerage, and last year I went back first-class saloon on the *Berengaria* ; that's what America did for me."

He looked up, searching my face for admiration.

" If I may ask, how did you do it ? " I said.

He looked round the dining-car. " They are filling up for a second dinner here," he said. " Come out on to the observation with me and I'll tell you the whole story. Here's my card . . . J. B. Rosco—that's my name. . . ."

We made our way to the observation car at the back of the train, and there we sat through the hot evening while the Kansas cornfields grew into darkness as they fled away from us on either side.

" Cosmetics," he said ; " that's how I did it ; and America is the only country in which it would have been possible. There's push here, push and move. Why, English women haven't got the initiative to make my business possible.

" I came over here when I was fifteen, came steerage as I told you, and somehow or other, two years after I had landed I found myself cleaning bottles in a little drug-store in St. Louis. The man that kept that store was a genius. Hezekiah Silas Jones—he's dead now, but he was a genius. I took to him at once, and we made each other. He came in to the dispensing-room one day and said, ' Rosco, I've found it. They are all too pale.'

" ' Too pale,' I said. ' What do you mean ? '

" ' I mean all of them,' he said, ' Mrs. Hezekiah and all of them ; every woman in America is too pale. It's the sun and air : it dries them up, Rosco. We

must make them rouge, Rosco, and there is money in it.'

" I was English then, slow, you know, and sort of fixed, and I said, ' But, Hezekiah, they won't do it. You'll never make respectable women rouge. It's not considered nice.'

" Of course I was a duffer then, and Hezekiah was right. He had seen rouge and he put it over, and he made a man of me in doing it. Now in England no one could have seen what a big idea that was. Think of it, millions and millions of women, and all of them using a little every day ! Why, it was great.

" Of course it took brains and work. We gave the stuff away at first to all the respectable middle-aged women in St. Louis. They were slow, but they saw it in time. I remember one night Hezekiah came into the store and shouted out, ' Rosco, we've done it. We're made. Mrs. Hezekiah has just come in from the women's club and fifteen of them had it. Fifteen, Rosco ! And some of the best in St. Louis. They'll all follow on now.' And they did. It was a big idea, you know : it wanted grit, and we did it.

" When I think of those old people away back in Bermondsey it makes me sick. They could never have imagined the big game which we're playing. You want this American air to think out a thing like that : it puts springs into you. Why, they would have a fit if they knew I had made my pile in rouge ; they'd think it was the Devil's work. I always tell them I am in flour. I suppose rouge is a sort of flour," he laughed. " I never knew how the stuff was made. Our business was to put it over."

"But surely," I said, "you must somewhere have a soft corner in your heart for England?"

"Don't you believe it, sir," he answered vehemently. "I am shut of the whole lot of them. It's the rain, I think; it gets into their skins, just like boiled pudding cooked in a leaky cloth. They are heavy and slow; they don't move. What did they do for me? They let me be born in that messy Bermondsey tenement, with all the family living in a room and a half, and no one knowing whether there would be food enough to go round the next week. When I was old enough they pushed me into a Board-school. There they taught me to read and write and to be satisfied with that place in the world which the Lord had called upon me to fill. Then, at the age of thirteen, they threw me into the streets and told me to stay there. What had they shown me of life? I had never been out of Bermondsey; I had never seen the country; I didn't know what the sea looked like, except that it was a splash of blue in the geography books of the Board-school. My father was a jobbing painter, only he had very few jobs. He drank a good deal because there was nothing else to do. Why, all the fun I could find in life at thirteen was the beer I could steal and the sixpences I could find, to put on races. The only friend my father had was a plumber, and I remember very well the night he looked in and told us that he had had enough of it and that he was going out to try his luck in America. What made me do it, I don't know, but I went round that night to a Salvation Army Captain, who always gave us a free meal when things were really bad, and

told us that the Devil was in every glass of beer we drank, and from her I borrowed enough to go out steerage with that plumber. I was fifteen then. My family were dead against it, but I won, and that's why I am here now. Now what did England do for me that I should love her so ?

" I'll tell you what is wrong with England : she doesn't respect men and women : all she cares for is institutions, parliaments, rights of free speech, liberty of the individual . . . words, words, words. I should like to see her scrap all her institutions and begin to care for her men and women. That's the difference between England and this country : you tread people down and we lift them up. Your big people, they've lost the way of putting new things through, and so they are all fighting to hold on to what they have already got. That's why they smash the under-dogs. There is no one smashed like that over here : we are all putting something over. If it's not rouge, it's something else. You have knocked the spirit out of the people over there. They are all like my own old people, glued in, half-dead, to the rotten life that they are used to. They'll never get out of their Bermondsey tenement : they've got the Bermondsey mind. If I go home and throw a little money about, they only get drunk. I tell you, it makes me right tired."

" But what of our Labour movement," I asked ; " surely they have spirit ? "

" They make me sick," he said. " What has the Labour Party ever done to remove the Bermondsey spirit from life ? All they wish to do is to agitate and

talk about a revolution which they will never have the spirit to put over. Even if they had the spirit, they would lose, for your big people have strength, even if they have no brains.

"You want a Labour Party with a little imagination, that can create things, just like Hezekiah and I created rouge. We all work together here: there is no top dog, or at any rate the bottom dog has always a chance to be on top to-morrow. And your government is quite mad."

"Which government?" I was moved to ask.

"All of them," he replied, "and they are all the same, Liberal, Conservative and Labour—just labels. The worst of you in England is that you can't see the difference between the label and the thing itself."

"You must remember," I said, "that the European War hit us in a very hard way. It is difficult for you over here to realize what damage the war did to Europe."

"War," he said. "Why, that is just the same as everything else. You are all fighting instead of getting on with things. Sword-clangers all of you; and you love it, even if sometimes it hurts you. Just a mediæval hell, as our man Page once said, that's Europe. When it really came to war, why, *we* had to put it over."

I had been long enough in the States to know the futility of discussing America's contribution to the war, so suddenly I changed the subject.

"But we have something of culture in Europe, surely?" I asked.

"Culture," he said contemptuously, "have you

seen our Universities? Go and look at that new College they are putting up in Pittsburg. I guess it will be forty stories high before they have done with it."

With that comment he seemed suddenly to have exhausted himself, for a moment later he said, "I must see if that negro man is putting up my bed. I have been right glad to meet you," and then he added unexpectedly, "I am always glad to meet an Englishman. If you are ever in St. Louis, look me up. Just shout out my name; they all know me there."

ENCOUNTER XXXII

WITH VAUDEVILLE IN NEW YORK

I MET the American stage and I like it: American playwrights crowd as many ideas into one melodrama as the West End theatre sees in a whole season; and the American language is as picturesque and as full of similes as Elizabethan English. If Shakespeare were born again he would arrange to come to life in the States. But it is not the story of the American stage that I would tell here.

I knew that Americans came to Paris, that they kept the "Folies Bergères" solvent, but it was news to me that they imported the ideas of the Parisian revue into their own music-hall stage. They have; and yet how different it all is.

The show I sampled was described as the most "intimate" of this genre in New York and, as a prelude to intimacy, the prices were higher than in any other show in Broadway. Before the performance began, the chorus came down among the more eligible young men in the stalls and asked them to dance on the fore-stage. American youth is shy in these circumstances, and it took some little persuasion to cajole three or four blushing "tuxedos" to foxtrot before the crowded house. As performer or

spectator one endured the dancing for nearly half an hour, and then this—the most frivolous show in New York—began with a speech. Yes; a solemn little speech by the leading comedian. He explained that the proprietor hoped that the audience would consider themselves, not in a theatre, but in a night club; that they would enjoy themselves with freedom; that they would forget that they were solid, success-winning citizens of a great democracy. He went on further to say that this show was an attempt to imitate those which could be seen on the great boulevards of the Continent. With flattering unction he suggested that most of his audience had been to Europe and had seen those shows. Of course they knew that much of the success of those European theatres lay in the zest of the audience. "Be zestful to-night, friends; think that you are in a night club, and we will give you a show which will compare with anything which you can see in Paris." And so it ended, as solemn a little speech as one would wish to hear in a Rotary Club or at a meeting of Kiwanis—and all, to introduce the most frivolous show in town.

Once it was under way, the typical features of the Continental entertainment of naughtiness were imitated with American thoroughness. The comedian played with the idea of seduction with all the frankness of a Restoration actor, though without his grace; and the comedienne passed from innuendo to brazenness. At convenient intervals tableaux vivants with the maximum of undress were lowered for the audience's delectation. In the intervals a negligé atmosphere

was the mode: one could meet, if one wished, the whole cast in the lounges, and chorus-girls handed out cigarettes and drinks to the young "tuxedos." The fact that the drinks were orange-juice reminded one that this was the United States, and one waited for the second part, wondering if it would be true to type or if there would be some feature peculiarly American.

All was normal until we came to an item entitled "Hello; the Audience will Assist." This looked very exciting; doubtless a continuation of the "intimacy" which one had seen announced on all the bill-heads and programmes. Once again the leading comedian came forward, and again he obliged with his little speech. The audience, he said, had shown itself very zestful. It had played its part well. Let no one think that the show they were seeing was anything but respectable; indeed, it was not only respectable, it was in the very best taste. It was patronized by distinguished people from all the best ranks in society. To prove this he hoped, with the help of the audience, to get a few distinguished gentlemen to come forward out of the stalls and say a few words. First, they had amongst them Mr. B. of the C. & O. Railroad. . . .

If the audience would only say "Hello" loud enough he was sure that Mr. B. would come forward. Mr. B. came eventually, blushing nearly as much as the young "tuxedos." He avowed breathlessly that the show was a very good one, and scuttled back to his seat. Next an advertising director improved the occasion with a speech rather longer than the management had anticipated. Nothing seems to

nonplus a hardened advertiser, and finally the president of a radio company came and advertised his wares. The leading comedian completed the act by reasoning with the audience that if all those fine and prosperous gentlemen were satisfied they must be convinced that the show was nice.

The intimate revue was a phenomenon possible only in New York, symptomatic and suggestive of American life. It would have been impossible in London, for the censor would never have admitted certain of the scenes which New York tolerates. New York is undergoing a phase which has been a development of the last four years. A part of the younger generation from the Middle-Western "Bible-Belt," free from all the ethical restrictions which troubled its fathers, comes to New York, all, as an English wit has said, "uniformly cosmetic," to enjoy the fun, and the faster the better. New York is the Paris of the Middle-West. The comedian who told his audience of Nebraskites and Wisconsinites and Kansasites that they had been to Europe knew within himself that this was his best joke.

America has changed her standards since the war, more perhaps than any country in the world. From the small-town Fundamentalism, where dancing and smoking were considered sins, much of American youth has taken its way to the cosmopolitan liberties of New York's "intimate" revues. The revolt towards licence is stronger in America than elsewhere, because there the background was narrower. One is impressed in America by an excess of animal spirits which the very toll of the war seems to have made

impossible with us. Yet the voice of Fundamentalism is still there, the thin voice of America's particular form of Puritanism. It comes out when the leading comedian asks the presidents of radio companies and railroad presidents to say their show is quite a nice show. For if they approve, who is to gainsay ? Is it not written that railroad presidents have an ex-officio entry into the Kingdom of Heaven ?

I went away longing for an hour in an old-style English music-hall with a frankly-vulgar funny man and a frankly-sentimental lady, and an audience sufficiently autocratic to know what it wanted.

ENCOUNTER XXXIII

WITH MYSELF

I

I CROSSED the Atlantic back to England on a boat crowded with humans. It was as if a human plague had seized that ship as thickly as green-fly on a rose-bud ; people everywhere, all over the cabins, in queues outside the bathrooms, crowding out the dining-rooms and lounges, and massed in their chairs upon the deck, like a bank-holiday crowd at Brighton. No one but a demagogue likes packed and massed humanity, and I am not a demagogue. I love humanity singly but I hate it *en masse*. For hours I wandered over that boat seeking for privacy, and wherever I went I found that the many-headed beast had preceded me.

I had determined to be alone on this last week before I touched England ; to be alone to think things out just like the characters in Mr. Wells's books. And instead of loneliness I found the human animal crawling over me wherever I went. Yet I determined that I would know no one. Of course I would pass the time of day with other deck perambulators and I would nod a " good-morning " to those whose deck chairs were jammed against mine ; but further I

would not go. Smoke-rooms and lounges and dances, I would hold them as anathema, and act the thorough misogynist for a week.

In the dining-room I was lucky enough, for I manœuvred a table for two, and the other was the ship's surgeon. He was an old, mild-mannered man who had never cared much for his profession but loved the lazy open life of the sea. His rightful place was at the head of a long table, a point of disadvantage from which he was supposed to make pleasant conversation to the passengers on either side of him. How he had escaped I never knew, except that he mumbled something about the crowd on board being so thick that he had had to forfeit his usual place. I suspect that in some way he had contrived to run away from his tableful and had gambled on the chance that I would be a silent companion.

Despite all my resolutions I could not help watching the crowd, and in a few days they began to lose the fluidity of the mass and to separate themselves out into people each with his own manner and each with his own very individual history locked away somewhere, if only one could ferret it out.

There were those first few days in the dining-room when no one knew anyone else . . . masticating jaws . . . the rattle of knives and forks . . . perfunctory remarks . . . the noise of waiters. But now on the third day came a mass of human talk arising above every other sound. And there were the rearrangements of people once they knew each other, and vague amatory approaches. Soon there would

be jealousies and hatreds just as in life itself. Over and above it all sat the captain, just like God, with an omnipotent will to control, yet with a desire to let people do as they liked as long as they did not upset the ship.

It was on the last evening during dinner that all my resolutions broke down and I found myself gossiping away with the ship's surgeon.

"What do you make of them?" he said, looking round the crowded dining-room.

"Do you know, I haven't spoken much to anybody," I replied, "but I have watched them, and somehow I think I've 'got their number' as the Americans say. Now there's that garrulous old lady over there—the one that is so anxious to show that she comes from a good family although she's an American—just a queer, fussy body that has always been patted and allowed to talk on."

"Goitre," said the ship's surgeon, "although she tries to conceal it. That's the beginning and end of her story. Now tell me about some one else."

"Well, there are those two over there." I pointed out a young girl with an Eton crop dining as intimately as the circumstances would allow with an immaculate American youth.

"And what do you make of them?" he said.

"Well, they are not married," I replied. "That seems obvious, though now that American women refuse to wear wedding rings it becomes a little difficult to tell. I should say that they are a modern couple, engaged to one another, perhaps, and coming over to see Europe before they marry and settle down."

The surgeon replied again in his short dogmatic way, not as one who thinks but as one who knows.

"Strange pair," he said. "She has been married; her family arranged it. She told me her whole story the first time she came on board. I suppose she couldn't have been on the ship more than ten minutes when she came into the surgery and asked me for a nerve tonic and then the whole of her story came out. Her family married her off to a man with money and she came to find that she could not bear him. This boy came along and they ran away together. He had plenty of money so they crossed over to Paris. As a matter of fact they crossed over on this boat a few months ago, and then later they travelled back with us to the States. But as soon as they saw America they decided that they could not stand it and so they are coming back to Europe once again. I wonder what will happen to them. A bright pair; the ship will be a little empty without them. They are making Europe their playground, but that can't go on for ever. . . . There is that English couple on the other side. Do you know them?"

"No, I don't. They seem quite well matched," I said, "the protecting he-man, you know, and the young helpless thing."

"I know them," said the surgeon, "but there is very little of your protecting he-man. That's Daphne Y——, the dancer. She makes all the money there is in that concern. He's a broken-down racing man. I never could understand why women marry the men they do."

We were silent again; both of us satiated for the

moment with gossip and purged of malice. It was not until coffee was served that the surgeon spoke again.

"That's how a doctor's life works," he said. "I suppose he sees only one side of life and he sees the worst. It's the ill things, the eccentric things that he is thrown up against. Sometimes he forgets the big, normal life which is always going on and which he never meets just because it is normal."

"Good night," he added, "I have to hurry away. There's a boy on B deck with a touch of fever. Nothing serious. I said I'd look in after dinner, though."

II

I went up on deck, and found my chair amid the chaos of people swarming around. To-morrow we would be in England and the whole ship had shaken itself from the lethargy of the last few days of mid-ocean travel. Every one talked more than before and louder; later there was to be a dance.

I sat beneath the stars on that summer night, wedged all around by people, and memories of this last year came back to be re-digested. . . .

How very different a night, one of silence and loneliness, I had imagined for this, the last before we reached England. Instead I felt everywhere this packed feeling, and below in the ball-room was the noise of the band picking its way through a dance tune from *Lady Be Good.* Yet it was fitting somehow, this overcrowded muddle. Everything in life had to be judged starting with things as they are. It had been a very easy game sliding from country

to country, looking in and criticizing perhaps. It would have been a very different game if one had to settle down and tackle the big problems, starting with things as they are. . . .

I remembered all the least important things; the bullock-carts of India remained more consistently with me than the Taj Mahal. Ruskin, or perhaps Walter Pater, ought to have been sent out on a special commission to India to describe the Taj Mahal: none of our younger writers have sufficient of the pontifical to accomplish it. Yet that dream in architecture with the delicacy of filigree, the hard permanence of marble, and a beauty of form at once passionate and human, is dim beside the memory of slow bullock-carts in a trail of dust. And how the bullocks would start when a motor passed them—the East meeting the West once again. It is the same with Italy. No one who has ever seen them can forget the Giottos in the Uffizi, the cloisters of San Marco, the Madonnas of Fra Angelico; but bobbing up amongst them there is for me a much more vivid picture of the Florentine cab-men, with their shining top-hats, their one-horse carriages that completely fill the narrow streets, and their way of clicking a whip till it resounds like a pistol-shot over the heads of the passers-by. . . .

Yes, impressions are misleading and stupid, and still more so are the generalizations that one super-imposes upon them. I have seen Americans more idle and lazy than an Indian bazaar keeper, and I have seen Indians whose speed in life would exceed that of an American publicity agent; and yet one imposes one symbol over all Western life and another

over all that of the East. It is as if the West and the East, however widely individuals may differ from the type, were the man and woman in life, the two eternal divergences upon a mystical unity. I only know that with some strange contrariness I love at times the East and at times the West. Sometimes I feel that I should like to see the vision of some gigantic Daibutsu, some super-Buddha, brood over America and show that great continent the symbol of rest and contemplation. If I were an American I would pray for poverty : national, of course, not personal. Yet with utter inconsistency there rises up at times within me a fretful desire to see the East Woolworthized. Whatever the changes of mood one may undergo, the East has something, some dropping of the mystery of heaven to earth, which the West is impotent to suggest. The dark magnificence of the East has often been described, but never so memorably for me as in the work of Okakura-Kakuzo, that strange Japanese whose full life story is yet to be told in the West.

" The night of Asia," he writes, " which enshrouds the Nations of the East is not, perhaps, without its own subtle beauty. It reminds us of the glorious nights we know so well in the East—listless like wonder, serene like sadness, opalescent like love. One may touch the stars behind the veil where man meets spirit. One may listen to the sweet cadence of nature beyond the border where sound bows to silence."

The talking around was louder than ever. Two American ladies discussed evolution,

" I think Bryan's right, my dear. To imagine that I'm come from a monkey. I have to bath each time I think of it."

" I agree," replied the other, a large abundant woman, " I can't imagine how this man, Mr. Charles Darwin, ever came to write that book. Because *Collier's Weekly* had a picture of his wife and his daughter, and they were both simply charming. Say, that's a sweet little thing, that young English girl over there. So slim. Why, her figger's like a straight line. I'm going to see if they can't do anything to my figger in Paris."

With that the two American ladies were silent; two other voices broke in, whisperingly, but distinct.

" They didn't know each other when they came on board."

" Shameful, I call it."

" And he's got a girl in Toronto."

" It's worse than that with her. She's coming over to get married. Yes, and the young man's to meet her at Southampton. How these modern girls do it, I don't know. No heart at all. Absolutely no heart. Some one told me . . ."

The whispers became more intimate and mercifully inaudible. Gruff masculine voices replaced them.

" Haven't played a game since I left England."

" Neither have I. To-morrow I shall be out on the green by the evening, I hope."

" What's your handicap ? . . ."

I began to think of this ship again, and of the gossip of the surgeon at dinner. Something he had

said seemed important, more important than he had meant it to be. . . .

" It's the ill things, the eccentric things, that I am thrown up against. Sometimes I forget the big, normal life which is always going on, and which I never meet because it's just normal." Was not travelling like that ? Seeing the pathological side of things and missing the normal ? These odd people whom I had met, were they typical or merely the flotsam of life ? There was Singapore where the twists in the human skein are so obvious ; had I missed the great, quiet, normal life, going on unobtrusively all the time ? . . . It was the noisy people one met ; the people who were changing things : politicians, financiers, schemers of all sorts. If only one could meet the dumb average man of each country, the quiet mercenaries of life, the tools of the fretful and the ambitious. If I had to make a prayer for the peoples of the world, I would ask that all these multitudes of humble men of good-will, the unknown civilians of each nation, the majority in the countries of the world, might be given peace and a chance to develop. Bread, fire, earth, water, if only we could keep to them, the simple, essential, elemental things of life. We might then save ourselves from the deceptions and vanities which beget jealousy and war. But we have gone beyond that ; we have eaten of the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge ; we have entered into the sphere of the abstract. When " progressus " retained its simple primary Latin meaning it signified a step forward, and with that we were safe, but we were dissatisfied and invented " progress," indefinite and treacherous

abstraction that can undo nations. Yet perhaps none of us is completely humble: we are all Napoleons in little, some itch of the soul, some epilepsy of the mind, irritates us into grasping far more than we have, and into believing that we are the "chosen nation, God's people." . . .

There were all those Englishmen in different parts of the world, governing and trading with strange people. It was easy enough to misjudge them, they who had to take things as they were. A passage in Page's *Memoirs*—a book I had borrowed from the ship's library that day—had stuck in my mind. "I've been writing to the President that the Englishman has a mania for order, order for order's sake, and for —trade. He has reduced a large part of the world to order. He is the best policeman in creation: and —he has the policeman's ethics! Talk to him about character as a basis of government: and about the moral basis of government in any outlying country and he'll think you daft." I wondered if that was fair, if, indeed, anyone had ever been fair to the work of the British abroad. Take away British influence and where would the East be to-day? There is a famous occasion in American history when Mr. Wendall Phillips said to an opponent, "My friend, I entrench myself upon the principle of human liberty and I leave the working out of the details to Almighty God!" And what a very pleasant division of the labour, too. What the British have done—and the Americans are the slowest of all to realize its value —is to relate that principle of human liberty to the details and conditions of things as they are. As the

official in Cairo had told me, quoting Blake, "the general good must be worked out in minute particulars." It could never be done by sprawling a few phrases of good-will across the East and expecting Almighty God to knit them into the tissue of human lives. . . .

This one had always to remember, how that the East after the war had a buoyancy, an exuberance, which we in Europe did not possess. The East saw less of the war than the West, and in consequence it had reserves of energy which so wantonly we have consumed. The European War was the first great war among Christian powers in Europe since our Empire in India had been fully established. I doubt if people in England realize the sense of disillusionment caused throughout the East by the spectacle of a death-struggle among Christian nations; nor perhaps do they realize the conviction, stronger nowhere than in India, that soon the Christian nations will be embroiled once again in a similar but more disastrous struggle. . . .

The band was playing again, and the deck was emptying; even those who were not dancing had been attracted by the lights and sounds of the ball-room. Here at last was the chance to think things out just like Mr. Wells's characters. Yet here lay the difficulty, that no longer could one think things out: that was the privilege of the older generation living in that pre-war Europe which was snatched away from us before we knew or understood. If one had been returning to England just twenty years earlier, what fun it would have been, such definite enthusiasms, such definite faiths, secure in one's Fabianism or one's

Liberal philanthropy, with so many national prejudices at which one could tilt a harmless lance. Oh, to be young in the days when Mr. Shaw was young. They have sunk away from us, those days; even the physical sciences are less assertive, less pompous in the belief that they are right.

Of course we flatter ourselves that we live nearer to life and explore more honestly the shifting image of truth. But was this just soul-easing unction? It seemed that twenty years ago one lived in one world and believed that one lived in another. Life as a vale of tears was one vision, and the wide-flung flag of material prosperity the other: it was like living in the drawing-room without ever knowing if the drains were right. Perhaps one still did it though one pretended not to. . . . At any rate this new England had lost in its power to act though it might have gained in tolerance. When we felt Europe to be the end of civilization and believed progress to be inevitable our philosophies were simple; but now as Paul Valery has said, "Nous autres, civilisations, nous savons maintenant que nous sommes mortelles." . . .

Twenty years ago I would have joined in the criticism of the vanities of England, but to-day I would defend the tradition which this changed England of ours stands for in the world. We are purged of pride, but our inheritance has still to be liquidated. The days have passed when we wanted all the world to adopt Anglo-Saxon institutions: I have no desire to put ballot-boxes on the Blue Nile, but the day of the end of our national usefulness has yet to come. I started out from England with a respect for theories,

I return with a respect for facts. Over a hundred years ago Burke saw through the fallacy of the formula, and denounced the upstart theorist's short routes to human happiness. . . . I wonder sometimes if they ever read Burke in America. . . .

The unexpected gives the element of fun to life; it shows the greatness of the pattern of the game. I remember one night in the Middle-West coming to the town of Des Moines in the State of Iowa. And in my folly I had expected the men of Iowa to talk of corn, mighty and arrogant corn, taller than Babel. Instead a man came out to meet me at Des Moines and took me to an observatory and showed me the stars. "That brown chocolate smudge," he said as I looked down the telescope, "that is a star which is being born. . . ." It had taken years for the light of that chocolate smudge to reach the world. For a moment one seemed to rise out of the Middle-West, to stand above earth to be at rest in the mind of God. . . .

But there was packing to do and there was bed. All would be bustle in the morning and a crowding on the deck to see the English coast like a long row of molars grinning at us across the water.

THE END

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